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# Children's television favorites and the values they portray: as perceived by children and adults

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Children's television favorites and the values  
they portray, as perceived by children and adults

by

Lori Perkins-Detrick

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Major: Education (Curriculum and Instructional Technology)

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa

1992

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

### Background

Television has become an integral part of children's lives. Research shows children watch between 25 to 54 hours of television per week. By the age of eighteen an average child will have spent approximately 22,000 hours in front of a television set (Lyle and Hoffman 1972). By the time they reach high school age, most children will have spent more time viewing television than any other activity except sleeping (Kalba 1975). Frady (1985) found that the influence of peers and electronic media has risen, while the influence of teachers and parents on children has declined.

Most would agree that parents should have a major role in supervising children's television viewing habits because most viewing takes place in the home (Baran, 1974; Lemon, 1976) therefore, parents need to be involved in making suitable program choices for their children.

Some interesting research has shown that there are perceptual differences in adults' and children's viewing habits. A study by Abel and Beninson (1976) investigated the relationship between mothers' and children's perceptions of television violence and they found that adults and children differ substantially in the way they perceive violent acts portrayed in television programming. This perceptual difference in what parents see when they view television compared to what children perceive when watching the same show is in the interest of this study.

## Organization of Chapter I

This chapter will identify the problem addressed, and the three main thrusts of this study. The basic assumptions and definition of terms used specifically for the purpose of this study, will follow. Last, the scope and limitations of the study will be presented, followed by an organization for the remaining chapters and summary.

### Statement of the Problem

The content of television programs have been analyzed by many different investigators for many different reasons. Sex-role stereotyping (Sternglanz & Serbin 1974; Honig & Wittmer 1981; Pearl & Bouthilet 1982), aggression (Bandura 1973; Eron 1982; Gerbner 1972; Gouze 1979; Liebert & Baron 1971; Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1963), prosocial behavior (Friedrich & Stein 1973; Cantor 1978), family interaction (Atkin 1975; Goldbert & Gorn 1978; Stoneman & Brody 1981; Brody, Stoneman, and Sanders 1980; Carew, Chan, and Halfar 1978; Rubenstein 1979; Singer, Singer, and Zuckerman 1981; Honig 1982), and television's effect on school achievement (Scott 1956, Springle 1972; Ball & Bogatz 1972; Anderson and Levin 1976; Singer & Singer 1981; Thompson 1964; Murray 1980) are some of the areas under investigation. These studies have shown the need for the importance of understanding information that is conveyed via broadcast television as it concerns the education of children (Winn 1977; Thompson 1964; Singer, Singer, and Zuckerman 1981; Raffa 1985;).

The purpose of this research is threefold:

1. To identify children's favorite television programs and characters, so as to discern what children enjoy and spend time watching.

2. To have children and parents rate the value content of television program's, according to their perception of character portrayals and programs value content, in relation to the five identified core value areas. These findings will then be analyzed, to see if children's perception and that of adults differ when viewing the same programs.
3. Comparison of parent's and children's responses will be analyzed by
  - A. Gender relatedness.
  - B. Child's and parent's reported amount of television viewing by the child.
  - C. Child's preference of spare time activities.
  - D. Child's appreciation of school
  - E. Parent's educational experience.
  - F. Children's estimate of their GPA.
  - G. Family size.
  - H. Child's grade level in school.
  - I. Child being first born or not.
  - J. Parent's and children's hometown
  - K. Parent's estimate of poor quality of television children watched.as they relate to group attitude scores in the five identified core value areas.

### Research Questions

A questionnaire was developed to gather information from 250 children, aged 9-11, and their parents to assess perceptual differences in television viewing. The data collected from this questionnaire were analyzed in order to provide answers to the following research questions:

- (1) What television programs and characters do children enjoy and spend time watching?
- (2) Do adults and children's perceptions differ when viewing the same television programs?
- (3) Do male adults and children perceive the value content of programs differently than their female counterparts?
- (4) Do children and parent's estimates of time children spend watching TV, at night and on weekends, differ?
- (5) Do children who watch more TV perceive the value content of the programs differently than adults and other children?
- (6) Do first born children estimate that they watch more or less TV than later born children?
- (7) Do children prefer to watch TV over other spare time activity choices?
- (8) Do children who like school perceive the characters portrayal of the value content of programs differently than other children?
- (9) Do children who estimate their GPA higher perceive the character's portrayal of the value content of programs differently than other children?

- (10) Do parents and children's perceptual ratings differ in relation to where they live?
- (11) Do fourth graders rate television programs differently than fifth graders?
- (12) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value honesty, differ?
- (13) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value decency, differ?
- (14) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value tolerance and compassion, differ?
- (15) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value self-discipline, differ?
- (16) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value kindness, differ?

#### Basic Assumptions

The following are the underlying assumptions upon which this study has been based:

1. Television is a potent and permanent medium of communication within our society which needs to be better understood because of its potential educative effects upon children (Raffa, 1982).
2. Social learning can occur when students imitate models on television. Aggressive behaviors are imitated more readily by some children than others (Bandura, 1977, and Bogart, 1973).
3. Communication via television contains values content (Raffa, 1982).

4. That people can perceive and discern values conveyed on television (Raffa, 1982 and Meyer, 1973).
5. That most people agree that certain core values are essential to a child's moral growth and development (Bush and Bell, 1987).
6. That people need to be educated on the merit and deficiencies of television program viewing, because it has a profound effect on the lives of children (Firth, 1967 and Graves, 1976).
7. Television's influence depends upon how the content is perceived by each individual (Kohlberg 1969).

#### Definition of Terms

This study attempts to find parent's and children's perceptual differences and attitudes towards television in relation to five "core" values. Therefore, it is necessary to define what is meant by value and to explain the importance of the learning of values in human growth and development.

Raffa (1982) summarizes the various views that attempt to clarify the concept of what is meant by value. She stated, "although it occupies a favored position in social psychology and education, it is difficult to define." In her review of literature she found "it has been variously defined in terms of interests (Allport, Vernon, & Lindzey, 1960; Donlon, 1974; Perry, 1954), guides to action (Von Mering, 1961), desires (Catton, 1959), choice or preferences (Morris, 1956; Thurstone, 1954), beliefs (Carter, 1956), attitudes (Donlon, 1974; Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1978; Thurstone, 1954), maximizing utilities (Rothenberg, 1966; Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1953), selective systems (Pepper, 1958), and needs or need satisfaction" (Handy, 1969, 1970; Hull, 1944).

The definition of value accepted for this study has been based on Handy's (1970), Mahrer's (1978), and Maslow's (1968) theories. They defined values in terms of needs and need satisfaction, Handy asserted that values can be observed and measured. He believed that need satisfaction can be determined by both physical and verbal behavior, and therefore "nothing that is totally impossible to measure in principle seems to be involved" (Handy, 1970).

Value defined for this study is: a value is anything which can satisfy a need, and which involves selective-rejective behavior in human transactions. Need can be defined as an unstable or disturbed equilibrium in behavior.

Piaget's cognitive developmental theory (1948), as well as, Handy's theory (1970) holds that developmentally there is a cognitive state of equilibration. Equilibration occurs, when children through exploration of their surroundings attempt to match their discoveries to similar objects and events, if they cannot assimilate this new experience to an old structure they accommodate by forming a new structure. For instance, if values are modeled to children through television viewing in a different context then equilibration needs to occur, so the value content can be processed. Thus, children can begin to respond to the environment in a mentally organizing way (Kagen & Klein, 1973). Equilibration is therefore, a state of stability and balance. "P.H. Miller's (1983, pp. 75-76) clarification of Piaget's theory of equilibration explained that equilibration covered three spans of time.

1. "The moment-to-moment encounters a child has with the environment as the child attempts to master the encounters by assimilating, accommodating, and finally achieving the state of satisfactory resolution called equilibrium."
2. "The final step in a child's moving gradually out of one stage and establishing himself securely in the next higher stage."

3. "The process of achieving ever better adaptation and organization over the entire series of growth periods, birth through adolescence."

In summary, a person's struggle for equilibration within oneself is an attempt to satisfy individual physical, social, emotional, and or intellectual needs. In order for human-growth to occur a person must enter, adapt, assimilate, and move into, and out of various stages. Through the selection and rejection of human behaviors, characteristic choices are made and a person is able to become a self-actualized person. "The highest stage of growth in humans is the achievement of self-actualization, which is a striving to realize one's potentials, capacities, and talents; it is a seeking to fulfill a mission or destiny or vocation; it can be a fuller knowledge and acceptance of one's own personality and an unceasing trend toward unity, integration, or synergy within the person" (Maslow, 1968 p. 22). Self-actualization enables people to form their own unique value structures, attitudes, personalities, and interests.

Children and parents in this study were asked to evaluate the content value of five children's favorite television programs. Their individual perceptions of what they felt the programs character portrayals were conveying were then compared and analyzed to see if perceptual differences occurred.

The five value areas chosen for this study were earlier identified by President George Bush (1987) when he named the "core values" that he felt "a democratic society requires." He felt these "core values" were those which, Americans in general would agree should be taught to youth. They included "decency, kindness, duty, tolerance, courage, self-discipline, and respect for law." "Honesty, compassion and tolerance, and "health values" (hygiene, nutrition, and safety precautions) were named by former Secretary of Education, Terrel Bell (1987), who stated that if children were taught "health values" along with the "core



values" President Bush had identified, "they would be well-equipped to deal with the more divisive issues with which they may become confronted later on." Thus, the learning of these "core" and "health" values were considered necessary for continued "sound morality" and effective problem solving and decision making ability of children.

The five value areas used in designing the questionnaire for this study were (1) decency, (2) kindness, (3) tolerance and compassion, (4) self-discipline, and (5) honesty, as defined...

DECENCY--- To think and act in a fair and proper way. Being polite to others. To have and show good manners.

KINDNESS--- Showing you care for others. Acting kindly towards others.

TOLERANCEand COMPASSION--- To care deeply for and have an understanding of others. To accept others as they are no matter how they look, what color they are, or who their friends are. To be able to get along with others.

SELF-DISCIPLINE--- Taking credit or blame for your own actions. Trying to become a better person.

HONESTY--- Telling the truth and being honest. Others can trust you.

### Scope and Limitations

The study is limited in the following ways:

1. The sample is made up of children and their parents from midwest Iowa, thus, their perceptions may not reflect other people's perceptions living in different areas of Iowa or those residing in other states or countries.

2. The programs and characters chosen as favorites were those that were limited to the midwest Iowa viewing area on broadcast television.
3. The results are based on the interpretation of perceptions and therefore, the study assumes that the analysis of content is a true reflection of those that participated, according to the way they responded to the television programs and character portrayals of the identified "core" and "health" values.
4. No attempt is made to study viewer behaviors as a result of the program's content or character conveyances.
5. The study will analyze the value content of the programs with regard to implications for 9-11 year-old children only.
6. No attempt will be made to determine if televised content will change the values orientation of children.

### Summary

This study will attempt to evaluate perceptual differences of children and their parents, in relation to the value content of children's favorite, broadcast television, programs and characters. The value areas used in the studies questionnaire were identified and defined. These values were accepted by educators and parents, as those values essential to a child's growth and development.

Thus, Chapter I has identified the problem, stated basic assumptions and limitations of the study, and has defined the terms used specifically for this study. The next chapter will present the review of literature.

### Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The remaining chapters are summarized as follows; Chapter II is the review of related literature. Chapter III describes the methodology and procedures used in the study. Chapter IV presents an analysis and evaluation of the results, and Chapter V includes the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE  
Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to build a foundation upon which the validation and justification of the study's assumptions can be made. The topic addressed by this study, is an analysis of the values conveyed in television shows popularly watched by children, as perceived by children and adults.

The review of literature is organized under four major headings: (1) social learning theory (2) moral developmental theory (3) television's effects on attitudes, values, and behavior of children (4) adults' and children's perceptions of television programs and characters.

A major assumption of this study is that television can be a source of learning for children, and can thus affect their values, attitudes, and behavior. The first two sections of this chapter, Social Learning Theory, and Moral Developmental Theory, are directed towards this assumption, in that they provide discussions of psychological theories that explain why and how television viewing can be a source of learning that can influence behavioral change. The third section of the chapter looks at both empirical and interpretive studies, that pertain to Television's Effects on Attitudes, Values and Behavior of Children. This section deals with two other assumptions upon which this study is based: That television communication contains value content, and that adults' and children can perceive the values conveyed via television.

The fourth section, Adults' and Children's Perceptions of Television Programs and Characters, pertain to the final basic assumptions of this study, which is that most people agree that certain core values are essential to a child's moral growth and development, and

agree that certain core values are essential to a child's moral growth and development, and that children need to be educated on the merit and deficiencies of television program viewing, because it has a profound effect on their lives.

Finally, the last section, Summary will summarize the information attained and will show the relationships of the underlying concepts.

### Social Learning Theory

In modern day socialization research, television is viewed as one of the major influences in the lives of growing children. A recent report by the National Institute of Mental Health (1982) concluded:

"The research findings of the past decade have reaffirmed the powerful influence of television on viewers. Almost all the evidence testifies to television's role as a formidable educator whose effects are both pervasive and cumulative...

Television viewing is so entrenched in American daily life that it can only be regarded as a major socializing influence almost comparable to the family, the schools, the church, and other socializing institutions."

This study holds the assumption that television has a potential educative effect on children and can influence behavior change. The term behavior for the purpose of this study, includes both physical and psychic change.

Based on this assumption, two early, opposing views of television's effect on people were (1) that television violence does not cause antisocial behavior (Klapper, 1960), and (2) that television is a medium with detrimental influences on viewers, and is a model of socially rejected values (Lippmann 1965, in Raffa, 1982 p. 19). Through the years more investigators have supported the latter viewpoint thus, more research has been conducted

on the negative aspects of television. These studies have shown evidence that children do learn from and imitate behavior seen on television (Bandura 1969; Brofenbrenner 1970; Almers 1971; Shemer 1979; Christenson 1985).

Bandura's social learning theory (1977), explains how social learning results in behavior change, and how behavior change may occur from television. According to Bandura, "the main reason a child learns from seeing or hearing a model is that the information he or she thereby acquires helps him or her decide how the observed behavior might help or hinder him or her in fulfilling his or her needs on some future occasion. This information is stored in the memory in symbolic form, as images or as verbal symbols, for future reference" (cited in Thomas, 1985 p. 402).

The process of learning from models consists of five main functions: (1) paying attention, (2) coding for memory, (3) retaining in memory, and (4) carrying out motor actions, and all four of these steps require (5) motivation (Bandura, 1977). The influence television has on children depends upon the individual child's learning style and her/his cognitive encoding of the visual symbols along with the motivation to actually carry out the learned behavioral responses.

Social learning theorists believe that human behavior can be learned either by direct experience or by observation (modeling). Raffa (1982) states that "most human behavior is learned through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action."

"Vicarious reinforcement can serve to inform, motivate, arouse emotions, develop values, and influence change in observers" (Raffa, 1982 p.19). Children learn vicariously through television watching and through reading books.

Brofenbrenner (1970 p. 27) stated, "that modeling provides a means for inducing a pattern of behavior which might otherwise never occur, i.e., an act which is low in the child's

hierarchy of response may never occur unless elicited by a model". "Modeling can influence the child's behavior in two ways: (a) she or he engages in new patterns of behavior, and (b) she or he engages in this particular behavior rather than some other activity".

Brofenbrenner further asserted, "that several models, exhibiting similar behavior, are more powerful inducers of change than a single model." As pertains to television, this means that repeated exposure to similar types of behavior by several different characters can be more effective in eliciting change than can the influence of one or two adults or peers whose similar (or opposing) behavior is observed only occasionally (cited in Raffa, 1982 p. 19).

Lewin (Lewis & Miel, 1972) developed an equation to explain behavioral change,  $B = f(P, E)$ , which reads: behavior is a function of personality and environment. "A basic assumption of Lewin's theory was that there will be a tendency to change when modifications of one or more forces within either the personality or the environment produce a state of disequilibrium (a desire to achieve some goal or object, or to avoid some object or situation). This means, that when personality variables such as viewer characteristics, attitudes, interests, values, and perceptions are combined with environmental or social variables, such as, TV content factors, parental influence, or peer influence, to produce a state of disequilibrium the result can be in a change in behavior" (cited in Raffa, 1982 pp. 18-19).

To summarize, social learning theorists believe that most of what children learn comes from "actively imitating or modeling what they see and hear other people say and do. Bandura uses the word modeling-- along with such terms as observational learning and vicarious learning-- to mean that the child adds to his repertoire of actions by seeing or hearing someone else perform the behavior rather than by overtly carrying out the behavior himself" (Bandura, 1969, pp. 118-120). Television is a source where children are

exposed to literally hundreds of different models. Children can be seen imitating their favorite television characters during play, and in other areas of their lives as well. This suggests that they are learning character-traits being modeled by television personalities (Bandura, 1963).

The question of whether or not television characters are conveying morally "right" or "sound" values, is a main concern of this study. What behaviors and values are the characters modeling for children? Are these the same moral principles that society feels are beneficial and necessary for a child's "sound" moral growth and development? These questions will be addressed in the next section on moral development along with a discussion on adults' and children's perceptions of television programs and characters. This information will be used to help discern what values are being perceived from the television content and characters, by those who watch them.

### Children's Perceptions of Television Programs and Characters

A main assumption of this study is that people can perceive and discern values conveyed on television. Research has shown that television does have an affect on children's attitudes, values, and behaviors (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963; Bruyn, 1978; Carter, & Adler, 1975; Chaffee, 1972; Collins, 1970; Donohue, 1978; Ellis, & Sekyra, 1972; Greenberg, & Reeves, 1976; Himmelweit, Oppenheim, & Vince, 1958; Liebert, 1973; Novak, 1975; Postman, 1981; Schramm, 1965; Winn, 1977). The extent to how much influence television has on children is dependent upon many factors in the child's life. The child's age, child's and mothers IQ level, family structure, family's socioeconomic status, aggressive nature of the child, child's achievement in school, etc., have been correlated with television viewing.



Children act out their perceptions of character portrayals through imitation. Their ability to judge a character's actions will effect how they perceive the model. Values television characters convey will have an affect on a child's existing value system if identification with that character is internalized and imitated by the child. Research shows that children most often identify with children (Halloran and Eyre-Brook, 1970, Sundqvist, 1970). Thus, children identify with mass media figures like themselves; boys identify with boys; children from lower social classes identify with mass media figures representing the lower social classes" (Almers, 1971). Girls display greater flexibility and will, on occasion, identify with male characters, while there is no record of boys identifying with female characters (Sennnton, 1958).

Wishful identification can also occur which is based on the child's desire to be (or be like) the "hero" or "heroine" of a program and which can be prompted by quite different factors. Results indicate that similarity identification is more characteristic of realistic programming, while wishful identification is encouraged by fictional or fantasy programs (Almers, 1971).

A child's perception of what the characters are portraying will effect how he or she internalizes the television character's actions therefore, affecting how much influence the television character's actions will have on the viewer. Some Scandinavian research on identification showed "children whose relations to parents and playmates were less harmonious tended to seek models in the world of the mass media to a greater extent than others. They were also assumed to seek other kinds of models. It has been shown, for example, that children who watch television and attend movies most frequently, as well as those who prefer more violent programs and films, often lack positive relations to the people around them. These same children are also those most influenced by what they have seen" (Stockholm:Sveriges Radio, 1969). This research, though somewhat outdated, is still

relevant to the issue of finding out what television characters children watch and admire. The information will help to discern what values these favorite characters are portraying to youth. This study assumes that the favorite characters commonly watched on television by children will be the role-models that have the most potential for educating children.

Donohue (1975), and Meyer (1973) found that most males, in their studies on children's perceptions of favorite characters and behavior models, became increasingly aware of the social unacceptability of violence as a solution for problems as they grew older.

Some research has shown that parents do not perceive the same value content in television programs due to gender differences. Women and men's perceptions are not the same. They also perceive the programs and characters intent differently than their children. Shemer (1979) stated that "to the developing child, televised modeling, which dramatizes a vast range of moral conflicts, constitutes another integral part of social learning. What is portrayed as acceptable conduct on TV programs might be reprehensible conduct by parental standards."

Most research on the perception of television has been done in the area of perceived aggression. Eron (1982 pp. 197-211) found that "less achieving children watch television more often, identify more strongly with aggressive television characters and are more apt to believe aggressive television content is real. Thus, they are more likely to be influenced by the behaviors they observe on the screen. In addition, they are likely to be frustrated more often."

Different perceptual ability occurs between children and adults, and between adults of different gender. Greenberg and Gordon (1972 pp. 185-210) found that "women viewers perceived more violence than did their male counterparts in the most violent television programs; the men saw more violence in the less violent shows."

Abel and Beninson (1976) conducted a study comparing perceptions of television program violence by children and their mothers. They found that "children perceived more violence than their mothers, that boys and girls perceived similar levels of violence, that boys watched the most violent programs more than girls, and that children watched the most violent programs more regularly than their mothers." Research on stereotyping of gender behaviors has shown that third and fifth-graders who watched a lot of television were more likely to stereotype both gender-related activities and gender related qualities along traditional lines (Rothschild, 1979).

To better explain a child's perceptual ability, knowledge of their moral growth and development needs to be understood. The ability to judge a television character's intent and to reason about the causal relationships in a television program will effect how a child interprets the programs value content (Kohlberg, 1967).

Kohlberg (1967), a leading theorist on moral growth and development, contends that a child progresses through stages of moral development. His theory consists of three levels of six stages that "represent a movement from lower levels of moral decision, where moral decisions are entangled with other value judgements and the rules are changed as the facts in the case change, to higher levels that separate moral values (justice and reciprocity) from other sorts and that utilize universal principles that apply to anyone in any situation" (Thomas, 1985 p. 357).

As this pertains to television, perception and judgement are effected depending upon the moral level you are at. Most children are not able to perceive and judge a characters actions, intentions or behaviors as well as an adult because they are at a lower level of moral reasoning. Yet, children are allowed to watch adult programs on television which offer sophisticated judgmental issues as plots. These program's purposes could be misconstrued by children due to their elementary moral reasoning ability.

Christenson (1985) reported on a study of children's perceptions of underlying morals or messages in television. He stated that "the sort of moral judgement a child is able to make in general certainly constrains the range of lessons he/she is likely to pull from television programs. For instance, one whose moral developmental is characteristic of Piaget's stage of "moral realism" (Piaget 1970) or Kohlberg's "good boy morality" (Kohlberg 1969) will be incapable of seeing the world in terms of abstract principles of justice, and will therefore not come up with a lesson based on that sort of moral reasoning, no matter how thoroughly he/she may follow the story" (Christenson, 1985 p.7).

Other findings suggest that, "We know, that from preschool through grade school there is a steady increase in the sheer amount of plot-related information learned as well as the amount of important, central information" (Collins 1975; Drew and Reeves 1980; Hale, Miller and Stephenson 1968).

For example, if a person is at Kohlberg's Level I of moral reasoning, the Preconventional (pre-moral) Level, Stage 1, entitled Punishment and Obedience Orientation, you would be apt to judge a model's behavior as good or bad depending upon whether the character's action resulted in punishment or reward. If a television character is punished for an action a child would judge the character to be bad. For example, an actor that gets ticketed by a police officer because he left his motorcycle in a tow away zone would be considered bad in a child's eye, (at this level of reasoning) regardless of the motorist's reason for parking it there (medical emergency, to help a rape victim, etc.,).

Other researchers agree that exposure to specific behaviors, whose consequences are shown, may result in the attachment of value to such classes of behavior by the receiver (Bandura, Ross, and Ross, 1963a, 1963b, etc.; Stein, Fredrick, and Vonderacek, 1972).

A child's ability to interpret a television character's actions will be based on their ability to make moral judgements, and the influence television has on children will depend on the

individual child's ability to discern the values perceived. An adult's perception will be effected in the same manner according to the moral level they are experiencing at the time.

"Kohlberg agrees with many social psychologists that children become socialized by learning to imitate the roles of people around them. As children interact with others, they imagine themselves in the others' shoes and see life from others' perspectives. Children also learn to see themselves as others see them. Hence role-taking or identifying and empathizing with other people enables the child to become an effective social being" (Thomas, 1985 p. 359).

Meyer (1973) found in his study on children's perceptions of favorite television characters as behavioral models, that the "child's favorite characters are seen as behaving quite consistently with the child's description of his own behavior, and his judgement of what is right or appropriate," which suggests that children are internalizing the values they see on television. This suggests that a child's judgement of what is right or wrong would be similar to that of their favorite television character.

This study is aimed at finding out to what degree television characters are portraying the values that society has deemed important. Evidence of children's and adult's perceptions and attitudes towards television viewing will bring a better understanding of what role television is playing in the daily lives of children. Television characters and programs, and the values they convey need to be investigated because of their potential influence on youth.

"Moral development is usually viewed as one aspect of socialization, with socialization meaning the process by which children learn to conform to the expectations of the culture in which they grow up. In the case of moral values, children not only learn to conform, they also internalize these standards and thereby accept the standards as correct and as representing their own personal values" (Thomas, 1985, p. 353).

"To be moral means to value morality, to take moral obligations seriously. It means to be able to judge what is right but also to care deeply about doing it- and to possess the will, competence, and habits needed to translate moral judgement and feeling into effective moral action" (ASCD Panel on Moral Education, 1988).

In summary, television's impact on children is real. The values conveyed via television characters are being internalized and imitated by youth. Therefore, there is a pressing need to learn more about how children and adults perceive values that are being modeled by children's favorite television characters. It has been accepted that children progress through stages of moral development. Internalization of moral lessons depicted on television will have an influence on children, depending upon their own individual value structures, moral reasoning levels, and their perceptual abilities.

#### Television's Effects on Attitudes, Values and Behavior of Children

Research on television's affect on the values of children is limited due to the differences in value structures across society, and the inability to agree on how values should be measured. Each family and individual has their own value hierarchy and order of priorities. This section will briefly summarize the research done on television's influence on children in the areas of aggression and prosocial behavior.

The most prevalent research has been focused on aggression and violence, and what affect they have had on youth. Physical aggression has been found to be susceptible to modeling effects (Pearl, 1982; Albert, 1957; Bandura, 1963, 1965, 1973; Berkowitz, 1963; Collins, 1970; Ellis & Sekyra, 1972; Friedrich & Stein, 1973; Hicks, 1965, 1968; Leifer & Roberts, 1972; Liebert, 1973; Lovaas, 1961; Mussen & Rutherford, 1961; Schramm, Lyle &

Parker, 1961; Siegel, 1956; Stein & Freidrich, 1972; Steur, Applefield, & Smith, 1971; Wolfgang, 1978; Wotring & Greenberg, 1973) as cited in (Raffa, 1985 p. 22). Children imitate aggressive behavior seen on television. Television programming is laden with violence and destructiveness. The use of guns, knives, and other weapons are used often in television as a means of resolving conflict. Abusive language and behavior can be seen in many programs that children view regularly.

The previously conducted research on television's influence on children shows strong support that television affects children's behavior. The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence found that "violence in television programs can and does have adverse effects upon audiences-- particularly child audiences" (Wilson, 1974).

Television does not affect all children in the same way. Factors like children's IQ level, age, socioeconomic status, their home-life, and academic underachievement all indirectly influence a child's perception of television. The amount of time spent watching television and the program's content also has perceptual effects on children.

Eron (1982) concluded that there might be a sensitive period that begins somewhere before age 8 when a child is especially susceptible to the effect of continued violence viewing. Children's taste patterns by the age of ten or eleven are fairly well structured (Schramm, 1965). Therefore, what a child chooses to watch in late childhood is more directly related to their own preference based on their likes, dislikes, and personalities.

Albert Bandura (1973) established that children imitate the aggressive behavior they watch on television. Noble (1975) summarizes Bandura's research on aggression and television:

1. Exposure to an aggressive film model tends to reduce the child's inhibition against aggressive behavior afterwards.

2. Child's aggressive behavior is shaped by the exposure to an aggressive film model.
3. Children tend to imitate more models who display rewarded behavior than those who are punished.
4. Children can imitate any film models if they are asked to do so (Noble, 1975 cited in Rojas, 1978 p. 11).

More recently, research has been reported on television's influence on positive behavioral change. Studies in this area have been conducted by Bryan and Walbeck (1973), Stein and Bryan (1973), Collins (1974), Paulson (1974), Goldberg and Gorn (1974), and Poulos et al (1975). Friedrich and Stein's (1973) study found that children exposed to overall, prosocial TV had increased task persistence, better self-control, and tolerance for delay (particularly for children of above-average IQ) in comparison to children who had viewed either antisocial or neutral films. This suggests that the value content of a program has an effect on the behavior of the child watching.

Walling's (1976) findings suggest that over a period of time, children learn about their social world from television to a higher degree of strength and intensity if parental interaction occurs during the viewing process. Corder-Bolz and O'Bryant (1978) stated that "an adult can dramatically influence the information a child learns and retains from watching TV." Honig (1982) also felt that "adults can enlarge young children's awareness of educational TV concepts through reading daily with them and through household and neighborhood activities that enhance the scope of a child's understanding."

Television can help young children to learn prosocial skills if programs like Mr. Roger's Neighborhood and Sesame Street are watched with parents. Television can also have a negative impact on children's behavior by increasing aggressive behavior if violent programs containing physical aggression are watched. These conclusions support the view



that television influences children's behavior and attitudes. It relates this study's assumption that television is a potent and permanent medium of communication within our society which needs to be better understood because of its potential educational effects on children.

Most agree that children need both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for learning to occur (Aukerman, 1981). Television is motivating to children because of the extrinsic attributes of the medium like color, movement, and sound. Television is action packed and allows children to learn through vicarious experience which is intrinsically motivating.

Educators know that a child will retain learned information longer if it is based on the child's interests and experiences. When children are allowed to choose the programs they want to view they select something that interests them, and because of this learning is likely to occur. Children have a wide variety of programs and characters to choose from. What a child chooses to watch will effect how he/she can generalize the program's content to real life situations. "Some studies have indicated that the relationship between children's exposure to television and resultant effects is dependent on the child's perception of the reality of the content" (Feshbach, 1972; Greenberg & Reeves, 1976; Hawkins, 1977; Mcleod & Reeves, 1980; Reeves, 1978). "The assumption is made that when the content is perceived to be realistic it is more likely to be assimilated equitably with information from non-television sources" (Withey & Abeles, 1980).

Lack of parental supervision, when it comes to television watching, has been a concern of many during this decade. Honig (1982) discussed parents that used television as a baby sitter. Few parents were actually sitting down and actively interacting with their children about the program's plot and content. Brody, Stoneman, and Sanders (1980) observed children and their families watching television and made the conclusion that "during the TV time, children oriented toward their parents less, talked less, and were less active." This

evidence supports another assumption of this study which states that people need to be educated on the merit and deficiencies of television program viewing, because it has a profound effect on the lives of children.

In summary, television does have an affect on children. TV can be used as a source of learning, and can be instrumental in shaping the behaviors, attitudes, and values of children. Parental interaction during television viewing can increase a child's learning of television content.

Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958) offer these generalizations about television's effect on children's values and adjustment: "television has its maximum psychological effect on children when the values or viewpoints recur from program to program," (like modern day sitcoms) "when the values are presented in such a manner as to evoke emotional reactions, when they meet the child's immediate needs and interests, and when the child is not already supplied with a set of values which provide a standard against which to assess the position offered on television" (cited in Raffa, 1985 p.30).

The more that can be learned about television's influence the better parents and educators can plan for televisions use as an educational instrument. Knowing the differences between parent's and children's perceptions of television's value content, may aid parents in helping their child make appropriate television viewing choices.

### Television as a Value Agent

Television's potential for influencing value formation is a question crucial to the understanding of television's long-term effect on society. This section will first discuss TV as a value agent. Then thirteen "core" values will be identified and discussed as they relate to television programming and character portrayals of values. These identified "core"

values have been used to devise an instrument with which to discern children's and adults' perceptions of the value content television is portraying. Further definition of the five "core" value areas, chosen for this study, will be presented in the methodology section.

Research on the analysis of television content, as it pertains to values, has been indirectly conducted via many studies. These studies include those on aggression, prosocial behavior, women and minorities, sex stereotyping, family role structures, and advertisement effects, and they all have suggested that television is a source for learning values. However, television's ability to change existing value structures has little empirical support. This can be found in studies documenting that imitative behavior follows exposure to television, which has been discussed in the Social Learning Theory section of this paper.

Is television socializing and teaching values to children? Research shows there is a good chance that television is doing just that. Once again statistics show that "between the ages of 6 and 18, children view 15,000 to 16,000 hours of television compared to 13,000 spent in school and have been exposed to 350,000 commercials and 18,000 murders. According to the Neilson Report on Television for 1980, children watch 30 to 31 hours of TV weekly--more time than is spent in any other activity except sleep" (U.S. News and World Report, 1985).

"Television viewing habits may be a better predictor of cholesterol level than family history, according to a new study of children aged 2 to 20. The study of 1,077 children was led by Kurt Gold, M.D., (1991). Eight percent of kids had cholesterol levels above 200 mg/dl, the adult standard for a desirable level. The study revealed that 53 percent of the group watched two hours of TV a day. Kids who watch two hours of TV daily are twice as likely to have high cholesterol as kids who watch less. Four hours of TV quadruples the risk."

"The violent, sexual, fairy-tale world of TV is increasingly replacing parents as role models. Seventy-five percent of a sample of 850 American high school students in four states said they would replace their parents if they could" (Austin American Statesman, 1979). "When 4- to 6-year-olds were asked in a two-year study, "Which do you like better TV or Daddy?" almost half said they preferred TV (Austin American Statesman, 1975).

Why are children becoming obsessed with television? Could it be that television is a stable agent in the household, in that it is always there. More stable than family members and inconsistently scheduled days with little supervision. With the increased employment of women in the work force, changing family structures (divorce, single parent), and the necessity of a two income household, parents have less time for their children. Television shows children how other families live (TV families), how children should dress, and what they should eat. Television has the potential for modeling to children a world that is based on commercialism and materialistic value. Dr. Ravitch (cited in Frady, Marshall; and others, 1985) stated that television is a passive medium, "it never makes you do anything over again. It gives you just what you want when you want it, and that's very narcissistic."

A study by Schuncke and Krogh (1982) revealed that children do have "sound" values. Their study determined that the following values are of most importance to children: (a) friendship, (b) property, (c) sharing, (d) truth, (e) rules, (f) authority, and (g) promises.

These values are those that educators, parents, and the rest of society also value. Evidence shows that the values children think most important are in fact similar to the values society as a whole supports. As previously stated in Chapter I, President George Bush and Terrel Bell, former Secretary of Education, (1987) agreed when they separately identified nine "core" values and one global "health" value that all children should be exposed to in their education. They are: (1) decency, (2) kindness, (3) duty, (4) tolerance and

compassion, (5) courage, (6) self-discipline, (7) respect for law, (8) honesty, (9) intelligence/education, and (10) personal safety, hygiene, and nutrition.

Other values seen to be beneficial for youth were offered by the ASCD Panel on Moral Education (1988). They stated that the morally mature person habitually: (1) respects human dignity, (2) cares about the welfare of others, (3) integrates individual interests and social responsibilities, (4) demonstrates integrity, (5) reflects moral choices, and (6) seeks peaceful resolution of conflict.

A task force formed for the Baltimore County Public Schools (1986) listed "a common core" of values in a democratic and pluralistic society. They were: compassion, courtesy, critical inquiry, due process, equality of opportunity, freedom of thought and action, honesty, humor, worth and dignity, integrity, justice, knowledge, loyalty, objectivity, order, patriotism, rational consent, reasoned argument, respect for others' rights, responsible citizenship, rule of law, self-respect, tolerance, and truth.

Therefore, it has been demonstrated, and most would agree that there is a common set of "core" values that children should be exposed to during their growth process. The questions that arise from this information are: Do children's favorite television characters portray these essential values on television? Do parents and children perceive the same messages when viewing these programs and characters?

The answers to these questions will help educators and parents divulge what values children are being exposed to on television. If a program contains none of the essential "core" values there would be little chance that a child could imitate them. On the other hand, if these "core" values are not being perceived, by children viewers, on television programs that children watch, what are they seeing? The answer to these questions would depict what values are being modeled, for children, on television and would aid parents in guiding their children towards more appropriate television viewing.

Some would argue that the value content of television programs can not be measured due to the inability to universally agree on a definition of the word value. This study has found universally accepted core values with in which to use when devising a measurement instrument. Therefore, a definition of the values to be measured have been defined. Others have shown that value assessments of television content is difficult. "But, several researchers have focused on particular occurrences or behaviors that, by implication, could convey or be instrumental in the development of certain values," (Raffa, 1985) as was shown, in the previously mentioned studies that investigated issues like violent content on television, prosocial behavior, content of toy and food commercials, minorities, elderly, and women portrayals, sex stereotyping, and the moral development of characters on television.

The purpose of this study is not to attempt measurement of the educational value of television. It is an attempt to gain more information on what television programs children prefer and what adults' and children perceive the value content of the popularly identified shows to be. This information will broaden the existing knowledge of what television is conveying to youth.

### Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter has been directed at providing a theoretical basis for the assumptions of this study. The study will investigate the values conveyed by television shows and by television characters. Social learning theory, supported by Bandura (1963), presets the assumption that television can be a source of learning that can influence behavioral change. Moral developmental theory, supported by Kohlberg, and others (1969) lends verification to the idea that television's influence on children depends

upon how the content is perceived by each individual. Research concerning television's effects on the behavior of children lends support to social learning theory.

Television as a value agent has been discussed. "Core" values that are essential to a child's moral and social growth have been identified and later utilized in devising the instrument used to measure parent's and children's perceptions of television, for the purpose of this study.

These findings will add to the body of knowledge accumulating concerning the presence of values content in television. This information may lead to the change of television program content to include some "core" values so that television can be a positive value agent in children's lives. Furthermore, such information can be instrumental to parents and educators in their decision of what television programs are suitable for children.

Finally, I would like to conclude with a quote by Littlejohn (1975) he stated "television is the most thoroughly attended to, most pervasive, and probably most influential means of propagating ideas in this country today. It can be instantaneous in its reach, intimate in its reception. It can exercise the most extraordinary sensory and emotional appeal."

## CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

A review of the literature identified a study by Kohlberg (1969) where he found that television's influence depended upon how the television program's content was perceived by each individual. Social learning theory, as supported by Bandura's studies (1963, 1977) established that television can influence behavior change.

This research study was conducted to investigate children's and adults' perception of character portrayals in children's favorite television programs, as identified by children. Adults and children rated the value content of these television programs, in relation to five value areas.

Chapter III includes information about the sample chosen, subjects involved and instrument design. The research was designed to answer the research questions previously identified in Chapter I.

### Sample

In order to conduct this study, children aged 9-11 were needed. Three school districts were identified. A letter requesting permission to survey the children and parents within these districts was submitted for administration at all three locations. Two school districts, Indianola and Ames granted permission for the research study to be conducted. The third did not. On April 27-30, 1990 two classes each of fourth and fifth graders and their parents in three Indianola schools were surveyed.



First, the principals at each of the four schools were visited and familiarized with the instrument. Dates for administration were set. The initial children's F survey was administered on a Friday and the CTF questionnaires were administered on the following Monday. These steps were followed (1) The children completed an initial survey to determine their favorite television characters and programs (F Survey). The data from the F survey was tallied and their five favorite television programs were identified. (2) This information was placed on the CTF children and parent questionnaires. (3) The children filled out parts one and two of the CTF children's questionnaire. All the questionnaires were collected that day. (4) The children carried home two CTF parent questionnaires for their parents to complete. The parents were asked to return the questionnaires to school via their children or return them by mail. The final date that results were collected from Indianola participants was on May 30, 1990. On May 14 and 15, 1990, two classes of fourth and fifth graders from four Ames schools and their parents were surveyed. The CTF questionnaires were collected from these four sites on June 15, 1990. Parents' CTF questionnaires were accepted by mail up until the June 15, 1990, cut off point.

### Instrument Design

The instrument selected for this study was a questionnaire. A questionnaire design has been identified as the most direct method of attitude assessment for a large group of subjects (Henerson, Morris, & Fitz-Simmons, 1978). In order to conduct the research, attitude scores from each subject were required. No existing measures were available; therefore, instruments were designed following the procedures outlined by Edwards, A. L., & Porter, B. C., 1972. The CTF parent's and children's questionnaire are included in Appendix D.

### Design of Part One

The CTF questionnaires were divided into two parts. The purpose of part one was to collect demographic data in order to establish a profile of characteristics of children aged 9-11 and their parents, from the two locations, who responded to the questionnaire. The parent and children CTF questionnaires were slightly different. Parents were asked three additional questions in regards to income, occupation, and number of years they attended school. The questionnaire items were designed to give background information, so that subjects could be separated during analysis of data, and when answering the research questions posed for this study.

### Design of Part Two

The purpose of Part Two was to describe the attitude of parents and children toward television character's portrayal of values, and program's value content. The "agreement-type" of attitude rating scale was constructed following the procedures described by Henerson et al. (1978, pp. 86-88).

The first step in the construction of the attitude rating scale was to poll parents and educators so that a set of core values, that they felt were the most important to a child's moral growth and development, could be identified. These steps were followed: First, 110 Parents and educators were polled with the ESV (essential values poll). They were asked to identify all the values they felt children should be exposed to during their developmental growth process. Ten value statements were the most frequently chosen. These values were defined (see table for definitions given) and administered to 97 educators and parents in a checklist format (VC values checklist). Second, a group of 89 educators and parents were then asked to choose five of the ten identified value areas, they felt were the most important for children to be exposed to through television viewing ( MIVFC Selection

Sheet). The five value areas chosen to be the most important were decency, kindness, tolerance & compassion, self-discipline, and honesty.

The third step taken in the development of the attitude rating scale (Henerson, 1970), was to have educators and parents generate clearly favorable or unfavorable statements about the five newly chosen value areas, in the context of television viewing, that could be used as items on the questionnaire. Three to five sample statements for each of the five areas were generated by 84 adults. These original sample statements that were easily understandable and clearly stated in a positive or negative format were then rephrased, using a second grade level vocabulary list and reading text, so that children from the ages of 9-11 could easily read and understand the items. These statements were then compiled in a questionnaire format. 186 items were kept and reworded for the initial CTF questionnaire.

The fourth step, was to administer the questionnaire items to a pilot group of educators, parents and other adults. Responses from 89 adults surveyed were scored. An informal analysis was completed following the steps outlined in Henerson et al. (p. 88). The items that provided good discrimination between high and low scorers were retained. Approximately 13 statements for each of the five value areas remained.

These statements were used to construct five attitude tests, one for each value area.

Last, the 62 items were then used for constructing the parent and children CTF questionnaires for this study (see appendix E). The five attitude tests given were as follows:

1. Attitude towards Decency (ATD) had 12 items with a possible range of scores from 12-60.
2. Attitude towards Kindness (ATK) had 12 items with a possible range of scores from 12-60.
3. Attitude towards Tolerance and Compassion (ATTC) had 12 items with a possible range of scores from 12-60.

4. Attitude towards Self-Discipline (ATSD) had 13 items with a possible range of scores from 13-65.
5. Attitude towards Honesty (ATH) had 13 items with a possible range of scores from 13-65.

The CTF questionnaire statements were placed in random order, using the following agreement scale, like that of Likert's:

- 1=Strongly agree
- 2=Agree
- 3=Undecided
- 4=Disagree
- 5=Strongly disagree

Each statement was placed into an attitude category which reflected one of the research questions 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. Responses were assigned in descending order from five points for the least favorable to one point for the most favorable. A score was computed for each respondent for each of the five value areas. The respondents scores were then compared to determine their positive or negative quality in relation to each attitude test. The scores were a reflection of the respondents attitudes towards the values they perceived were being seen on television through programming and character portrayals.

The following is a list of the research questions related to questionnaire items:

1. What television programs and characters do children enjoy and spend time watching?

(Initial Favorite TV Programs and Characters Poll (F SURVEY) see Appendix C, and item 14 on Part I of the parent's questionnaire)

2. Do adults and children's perceptions differ, when viewing the same television programs?

The attitude scores for each of the five attitude subtests...

ATK items 4, 14, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 39, 46, 48, 57, 58

ATSD items 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 31, 32, 37, 38, 45, 51, 53

ATD items 1, 3, 18, 21, 28, 30, 34, 35, 42, 43, 50, 60

ATTC items 7, 12, 13, 22, 25, 29, 40, 55, 56, 59, 61, 62

ATH items 2, 9, 16, 17, 23, 33, 36, 41, 44, 47, 49, 52, 54

3. Do male adults and children perceive the value content of programs differently than their female counterparts?

(Item 1 on Part I and the attitude scores for each of the five attitude subtests-- ATH, ATD, ATK, ATTC, ATSD).

4. Do children and parent's estimates of time children spend watching TV, at night and on weekends, differ?

(Items 7 and 8 on Part I)

5. Do children who watch more TV perceive the value content of TV programs differently than adults and other children?

(Items 7 and 8 on Part I and the attitude scores for each of the five attitude subtests-- ATH, ATK, ATTC, ATSD, ATD)

6. Do first born children perceive the value content of TV differently than later born children?

(Item 10 on Part I of the CTF children's questionnaire and items 7 and 8 on Part II)

7. Do children prefer to watch TV over other spare time activity choices?  
(Item 11 on Part I)
8. Do children who like school perceive the character's portrayal of the value content of programs differently than other children?  
(Item 12 on Part I and the attitude scores for each of the five attitude subtests)
9. Do children who estimate their GPA higher perceive the character's portrayal of the value content of programs differently than other children?  
(Item 6 on Part 1 of the CTF children's questionnaire and the attitude scores for each of the five attitude subtests)
10. Do parents and children's perceptual ratings differ in relation to where they live?  
(Item 4 on Part 1 of the CTF children's questionnaire and the attitude scores for each of the five attitude subtests)
11. Do fourth graders rate television programs differently than fifth graders?  
(Item 3 on Part 1 of the CTF children's questionnaire and the attitude scores for each of the five value subtests)
12. Do adults' and children's perceptions of television characters portrayals of the value honesty, differ?  
(ATH- Items 2, 9, 16, 17, 23, 33, 36, 41, 44, 47, 49, 52, and 54 on Part II)

13. Do adults' and children's perceptions of television characters

portrayals of the value decency, differ?

(ATD-Items 1, 3, 18, 21, 28, 30, 34, 35, 42, 43, 50, and 60 on  
Part II)

14. Do adults' and children's perceptions of television characters

portrayals of the value tolerance and compassion, differ?

(ATTC- Items 7, 12, 13, 22, 25, 29, 40, 55, 56, 59, 61, and 62  
on Part II)

15. Do adults' and children's perceptions of television characters

portrayals of the value self-discipline, differ?

(ATSD-Items 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 31, 32, 37, 38, 45, 51, and 53  
on Part II)

16. Do adults' and children's perceptions of television characters

portrayals of the value kindness, differ?

(ATK-Items 4, 14, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 39, 46, 48, 57, and 58 on  
Part II)

#### Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

The CTF children's questionnaire was pilot-tested on a group of 9 same aged children. Students responded to the items using the same Likert-like agreement scale that was used on the studies questionnaires. The measures were informally analyzed following the procedure in Henerson et al. (1978, pp. 135-36). Some vocabulary changes were made to further simplify the statements. No items were deleted or added to the questionnaire.

The construct validity was tested following the procedure described in Henerson et al. (1978, pp. 135-36). The statements, grouped by the constructs measured, were given to eight

parents of school aged children. They were asked to identify which construct the group of statements were measuring. The parent's responses were similar for all five value areas. Therefore, the construct validity was determined to be acceptable.

The instrument, "A study of Children's Television Favorites and the Values they Portray, as Perceived by Children and their Parents Questionnaire," was reviewed and certified by the Iowa State University Human Subject Review Committee (see Appendix B). Ames School District's research committee also reviewed the questionnaires and allowed the instrument to be administered in their schools (see Appendix A). Indianola School's administration also gave consent to survey their students (see Appendix A).

#### Distribution of the Questionnaire

Indianola and Ames Schools gave their consent to have their students, aged 9-11, surveyed. Principals at each school were contacted by telephone to set an appointment to further describe the study and the instruments involved. Three schools were selected for the study from Indianola School District and four schools from Ames School District. The sites were chosen because of their demographic location, availability and accessibility of students to be surveyed, and principal's interest in the endeavor. All children aged 9-11 from two classrooms at each site were surveyed.

First, parent permission slips were sent home to students in these classes on a Friday. The slips asked if permission could be granted for their children to be a part of the research study. Parents also made a commitment to participate in the study, at this time. The following Monday the children that returned the permission slips were given the initial F Survey to determine what their favorite television programs were and to identify favorite characters (see Appendix C). These initial responses from all participants were then tallied so that five favorite television programs could be identified. This list was included in the



parent and children's questionnaires so that children and parents could have knowledge of some of the programs and characters their children enjoyed watching the most.

Second, the children were asked to fill out Part One and Part Two of the CTF children's questionnaire. Instructions were read to them and any misunderstanding clarified before the children responded to the questionnaire. The same person administered the questionnaires at all eight sites, in person. The questionnaires were collected from the children on the same day immediately after they were completed.

Third, the children were asked to hand carry two CTF parent questionnaires home for their parents to fill out. Parents were given four weeks to return the questionnaires. They could mail their responses in or return them to school with their children. All questionnaires were picked up from each of the sites on the assigned dates. A reminder was sent home to parents via their children after two weeks. Teachers were asked to remind children to ask their parents for the questionnaires weekly.

Indianola children and parents were surveyed starting on April 27th and ending on May 30th, 1990. Ames children and parents were surveyed starting on May 14th and ending on June 15th, 1990.

At Indianola 60 children and 120 parents were polled. The number of parents who returned the CTF parent questionnaire was 51. All 60 of the children's CTF questionnaires were collected. At Ames 260 parents were polled and 130 children, of these, 129 of the children's CTF questionnaires were collected. Of the parents polled, 111 returned their CTF questionnaires. The total number of adult participants=162. The total number of children participants=189.

### Treatment of the Data

The data collected was used to describe the attitudes of children aged 9-11 and their parents, toward television character portrayals of the value content of children's favorite television programs. Children's television viewing patterns, favorite characters and programs, and spare time activity choices were also identified. The data were analyzed to include these descriptive statistics: (1) frequency of each response, (2) percentage of each response, (3) number of responses for each item, (4) mean scores, and (5) standard deviation of scores.

### Summary

Children's favorite television characters and programs were identified. An attitude rating scale was constructed for analysis of children's favorite television programs. Five value constructs were formed to be used in analyzing parent's and children's perceptions of television programs and characters.

## CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

The CTF questionnaires-Children's Favorite Television Programs And The Values They Portray, As Perceived By Children And Adults, were administered. The responses from the children and parent CTF questionnaires were used to describe the attitudes of children aged 9-11, and their parents. The attitudes reflected the values that they perceived were being portrayed on children's favorite television programs.

The data reported in this chapter were collected from the CTF questionnaire and analyzed. This chapter contains the results of the statistical procedures used to: (1) provide a descriptive profile of the participating children, aged 9-11, and their parents, (2) provide a description of the attitudes of the respondents for each of the five value areas identified, (3) provide an examination of relevant relationships and differences among variables used in this study, and (4) present a summary of conclusions.

### Profile of Respondents

The purpose of Part One of the CTF, parent and children's questionnaires, were to provide a descriptive profile of the two sample groups. The items in Part One of the CTF questionnaires were relevant to research questions 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 as listed in Chapter I. Frequency distributions were computed for each item in Part One of the children's and parent's CTF in order to accurately describe characteristics of the parent and children samples and to identify television viewing habits and children's favorite television programs. These distributions are explained in Figures 1-21 and Tables 1 & 2. The characteristics of the two sample groups are described and reported in the same order that

the question relating to that characteristic appeared in Part One of the CTF (Children's Questionnaire and Part One of the CTF Parent's Questionnaire).

#### Description of Children Respondents

Data were collected from 189 (n = 189) children respondents, from two school districts. Seventy-six percent of polled children responded. 250 permission forms were sent out asking parent's permission for their child and themselves to participate in the study, and 190 were returned. The children's responses were analyzed as one group. The data collected from the CTF questionnaire are listed below, in the order that the statements appeared in the survey.

- (1) Forty-seven percent (89; 47.1%) of the children responding were male (Figure 1).
- (2) The children were fourth and fifth grade students, aged 9-11. Approximately seven percent (14; 7.4%) of the responding students were nine years old. Forty-six percent (86; 45.5%) were ten years old and forty-seven percent (89; 47.1%) were eleven years old (Figure 2).
- (3) Forty-five percent (84; 45.0%) of the respondents were fourth grade students. Fifty-five percent (103; 55.0%) were fifth graders (Figure. 3).
- (4) Name of respondents school was not analyzed. It was used for identification purposes, only.
- (5) Figure 4 shows that the majority of the children who responded to the CTF questionnaire, ninety-two percent, were White (165; 91.5%). Approximately two percent of the respondents (3; 1.6%) were Black. One percent (2; 1.1%) were of Hispanic origin. Another one percent (2; 1.1%) were Vietnamese or Laotian. Five percent listed "other" as their race (8; 4.8%).

N=189

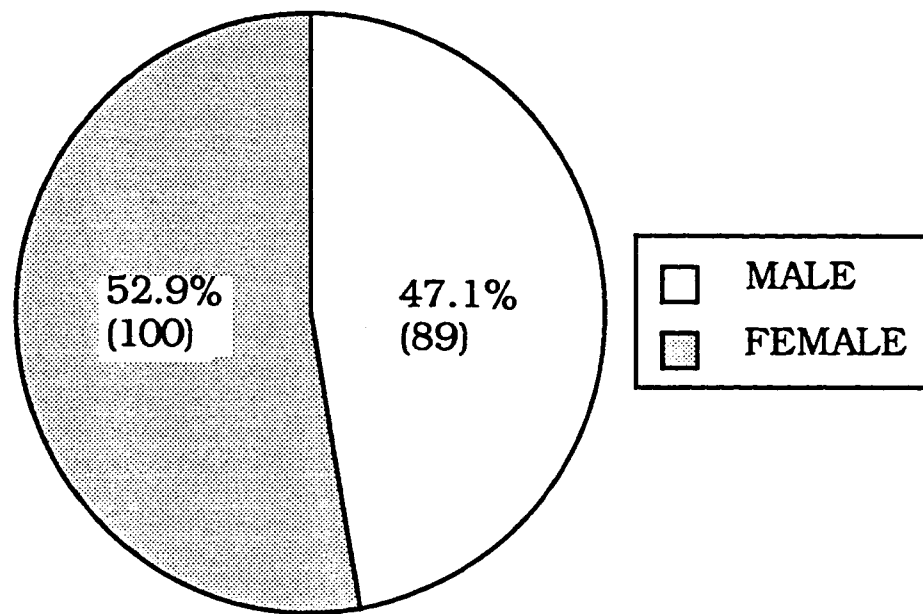


Figure 1. Gender of children responding

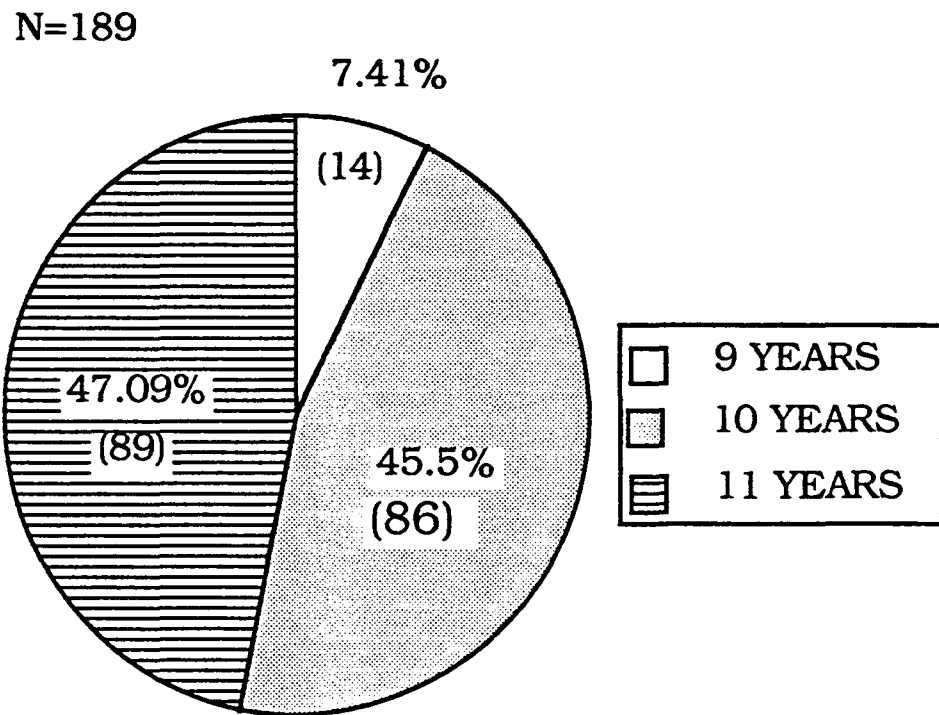


Figure 2. Ages of children responding

N=187

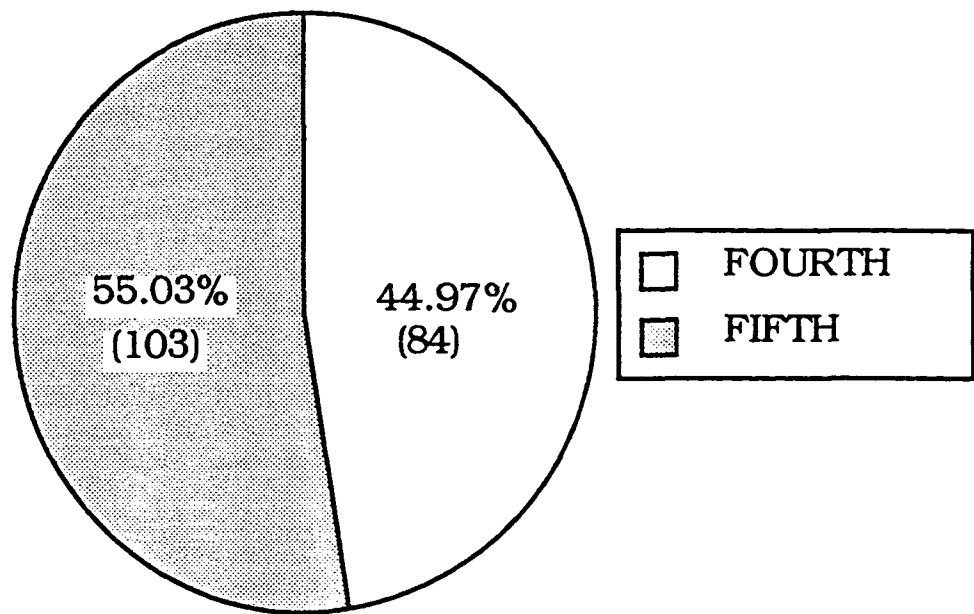


Figure 3. Grades of children responding

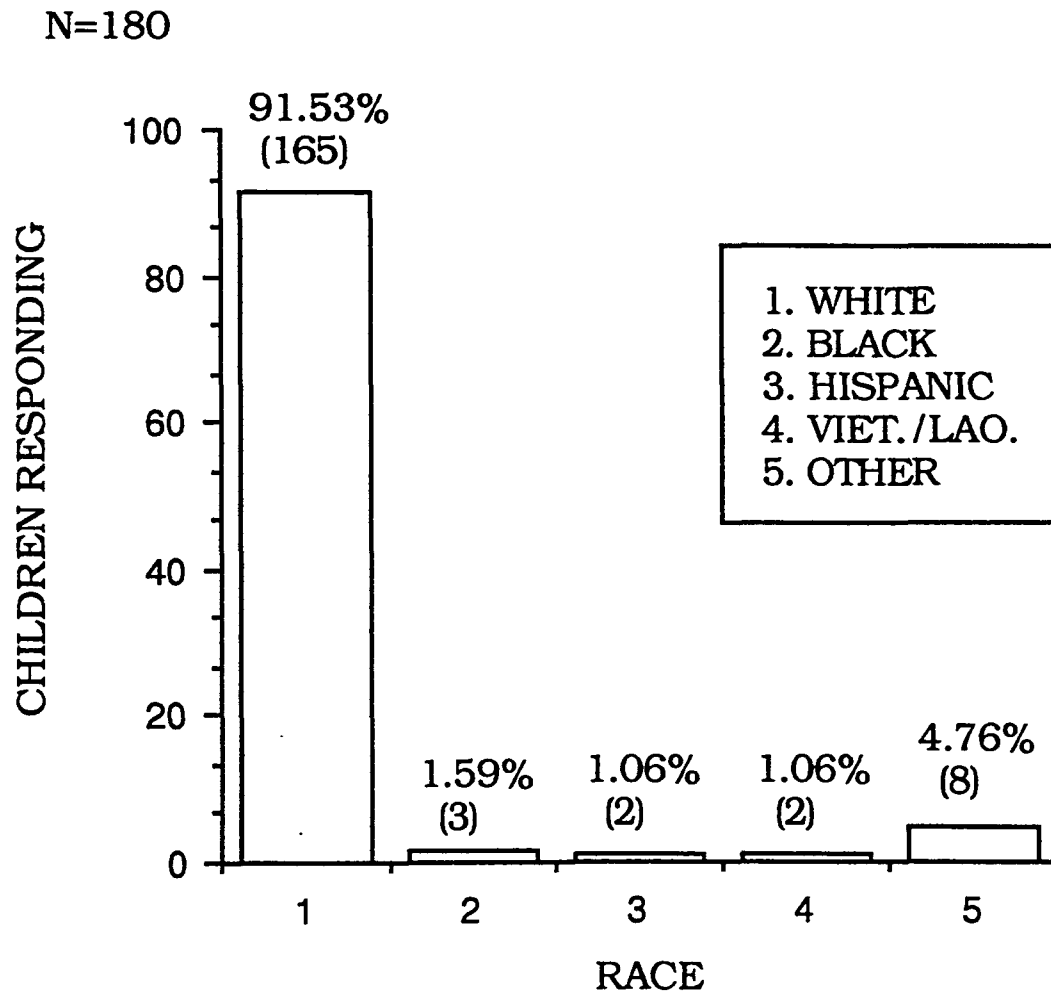


Figure 4. Children's race



(6) Child's GPA could not be determined because children in these schools were not graded on a four point scale.

(7) The number of hours children spent watching television on school days, Monday-Friday, were estimated by the children respondents. Thirty-two percent (59; 31.8%) of the respondents estimated that they watched from 0-2 hours of television a day. Forty percent (74; 39.7%) felt they watched 4-5 hours of television daily, twenty percent (19.6%) watched 5-6 hours a day, and nine percent (17; 9.0%) reported that they watched seven or more hours daily (Figure 5).

(8) Children were also asked to estimate the number of hours a day they watched television on weekends (Saturday and Sunday). Twenty-three (43; 22.8%) percent estimated that they watched one to three hours a day, thirty-four (63; 33.9%) percent watched between three-and-a-half to five hours, another twenty-three (43; 22.8%) percent reported watching between five-and-a-half to seven hours a day, and the remaining twenty-one (39; 20.6%) percent watched seven-and-a-half hours or more daily on the weekends (Figure 6).

(9) Responses indicated that seven percent (14; 7.4%) of the children were an only child, forty percent (74; 39.7%) had one sibling, twenty-eight percent (52; 28.0%) had two siblings, fourteen percent (13.76%) had three siblings, and five percent (10; 5.3%) had four siblings. Six percent (11; 5.8%) of the respondents had five or more siblings (Figure 7).

(10) Half (94; 50.3%) of the respondents were the oldest child in their family (Figure 8).

(11) Each child respondent chose two activities that reflected how they spent most of their time outside of school. The greatest number of responses, eighty-six, indicated that children spent most of their spare time watching television. Sports had eighty-three responses. Sixteen responses were for chores or homework.

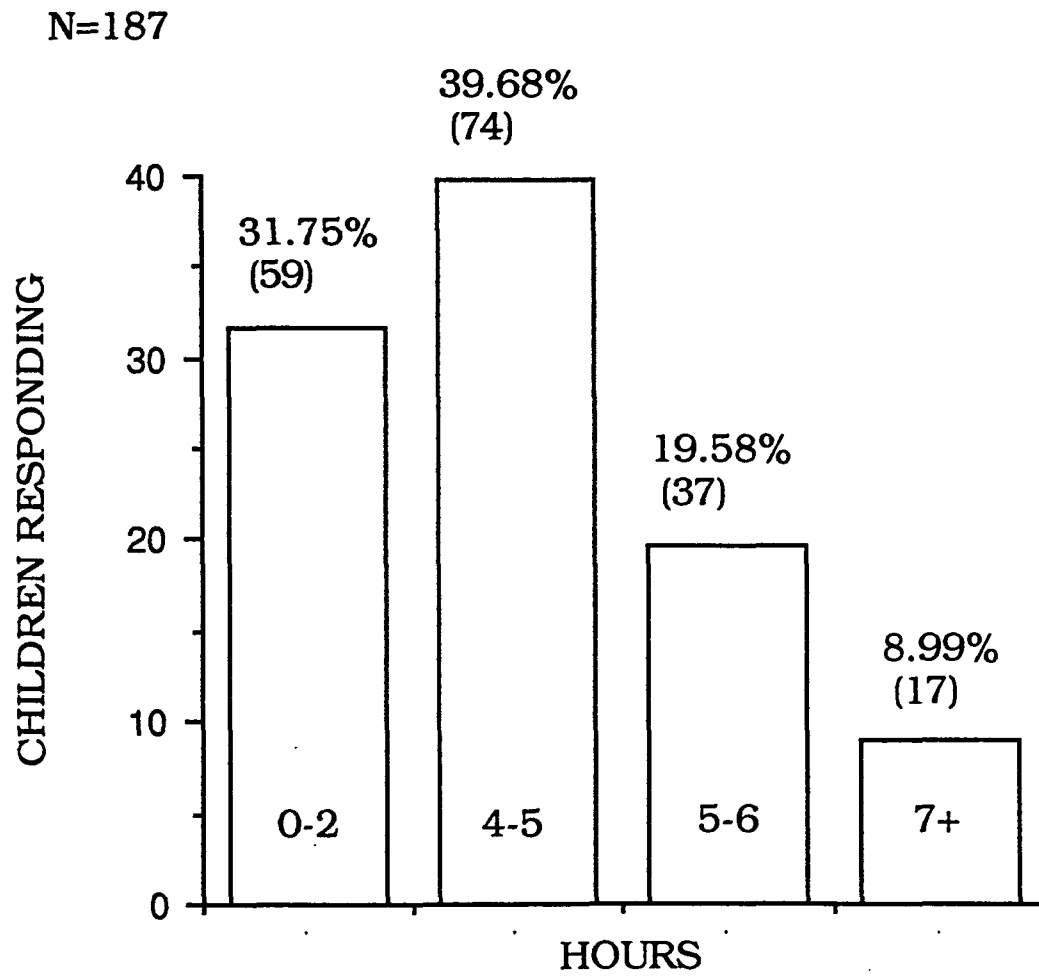


Figure 5. Television hours children watched Monday-Friday

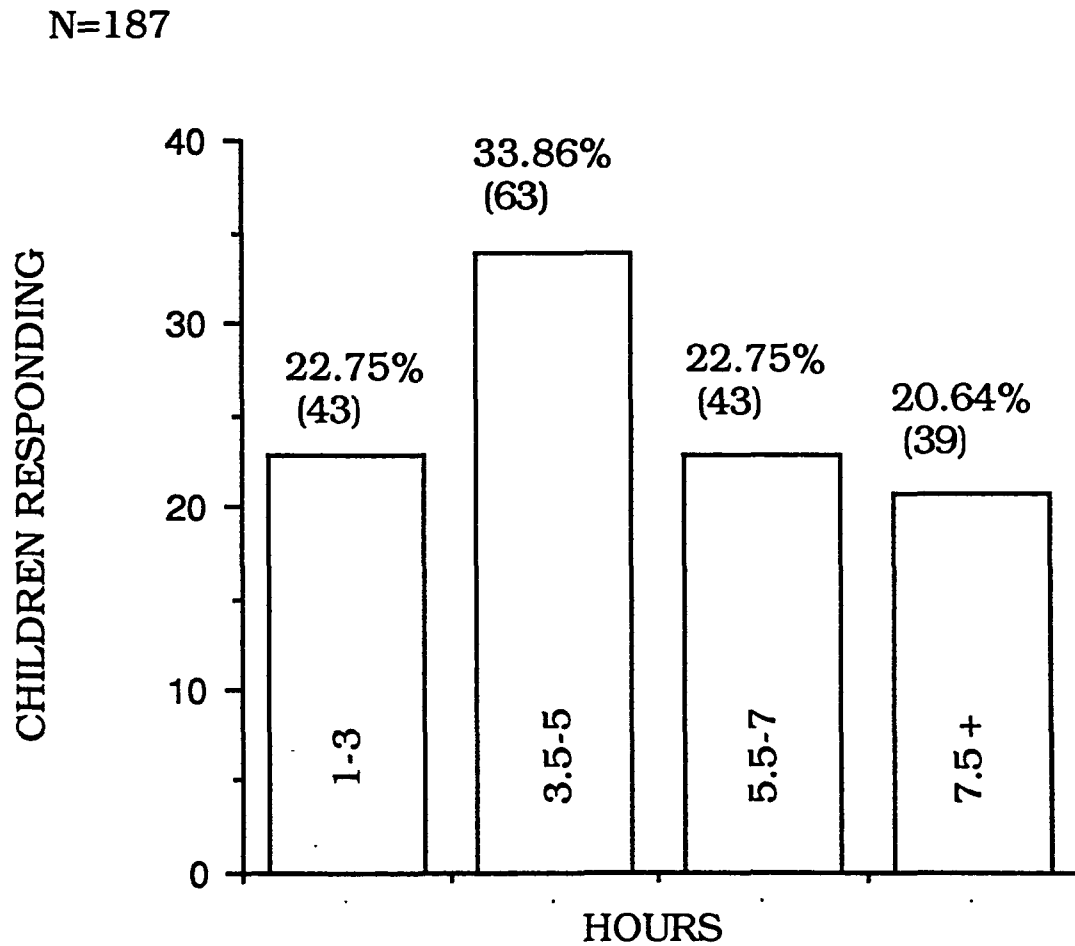


Figure 6. Hours of television children watched on Saturday and Sunday

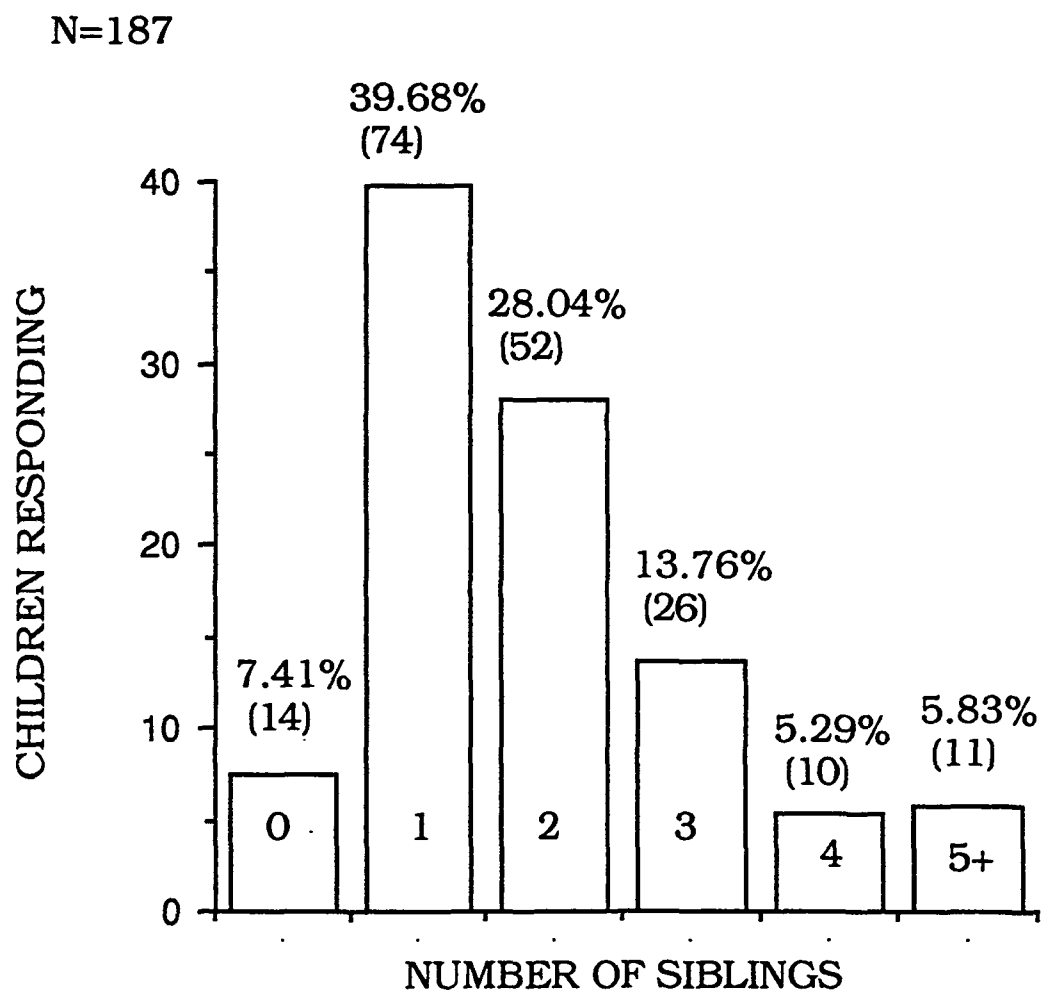


Figure 7. Children's number of siblings

N=187

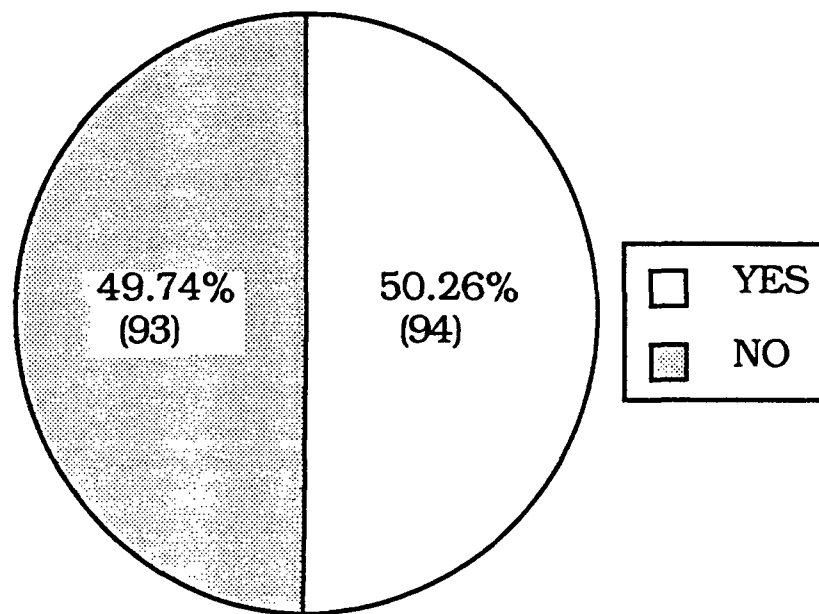


Figure 8. Child first born or not

Thirty-three responses showed children spent time reading. Thirty-one responses were marked to show that children chose to study in their spare time. Twenty-seven responses were indicated for playing video games. Eighteen chose a hobby and six responses were for spending time with their families (See Table 1).

(12) The majority of the children, seventy-seven percent (144; 77.3 %), said they liked school and twenty-three percent (43; 22.8 %) said they did not like school (Figure 9).

(13) The top five favorite television programs reported by children in this study were (1) The Simpsons (2) Full House (3) Growing Pains (4) The Cosby Show, and (5) Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

#### Description of Adult Respondents

One hundred and sixty-two ( $n = 162$ ) adults responded to the survey which was eighty-six percent (85.71 %) off all families polled. 378 parent questionnaires were sent out, two per each child's household, 189 households. The adult respondents were parents of the children who participated in this study.

(1) Figure 10 shows that forty-six percent (74; 46.0%) of the parents responding were male.

(2) The parent's ages ranged from 28 - 57. With the largest number (76; 47.4 %) falling between the ages of thirty-four to thirty-nine (Figure 11).

(3) The largest percentage of the adult respondents were white (148; 94.4 %). One percent (2; 1.3 %) each were either Black, Hispanic, Chinese, or listed as "other". Less than one percent (1; .6 %) were Laotian (Figure 12).

Table 1. What children chose to do in their spare time

Response	Number of responses
Study	31
Sports	83
Hobby	18
Reading	33
Watching T.V.	86
Playing	24
Chores/homework	16
Video games	27
Family	6
Other	<u>44</u>
Totals	368

N=189  
(Each child chose two activities)

N=187

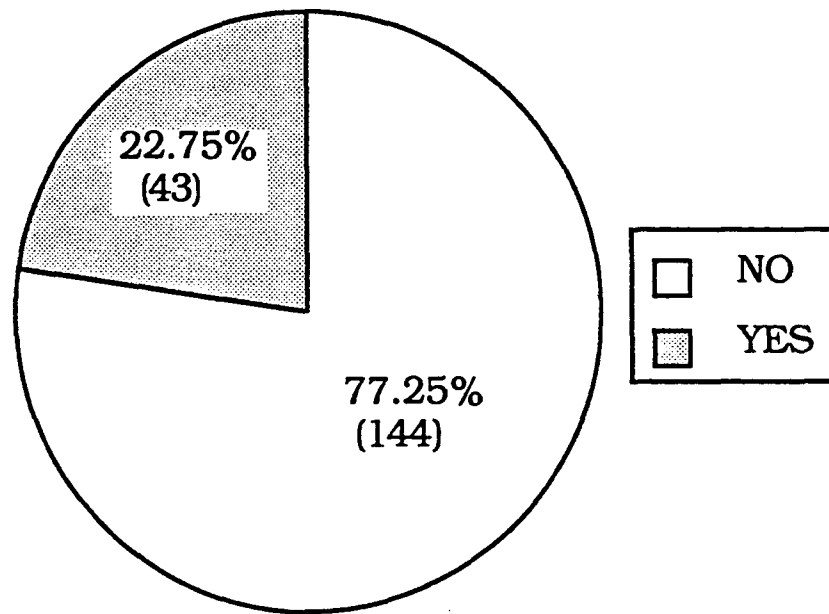


Figure 9. Whether children liked school or not



N=161

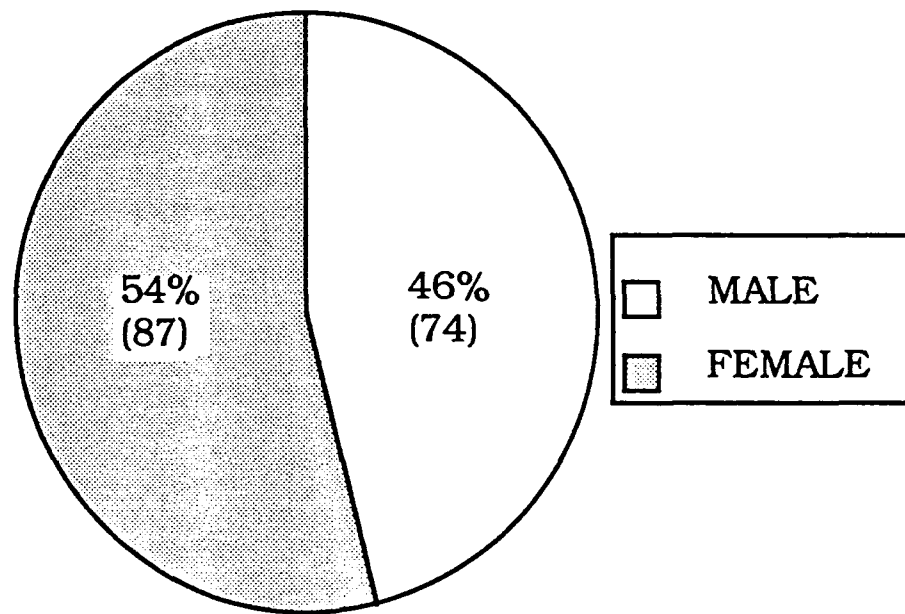


Figure 10. Gender of parents responding

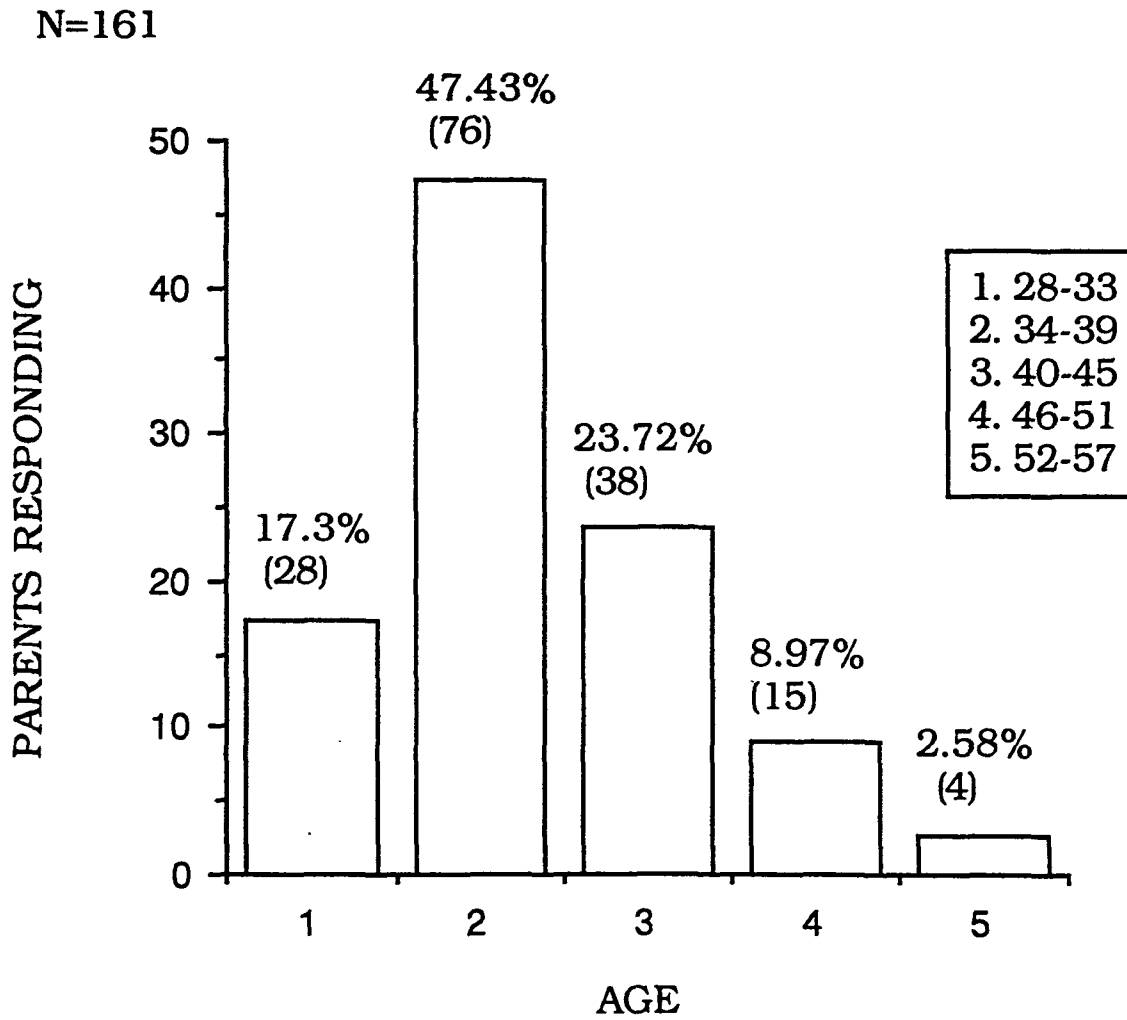


Figure 11. Parent's age

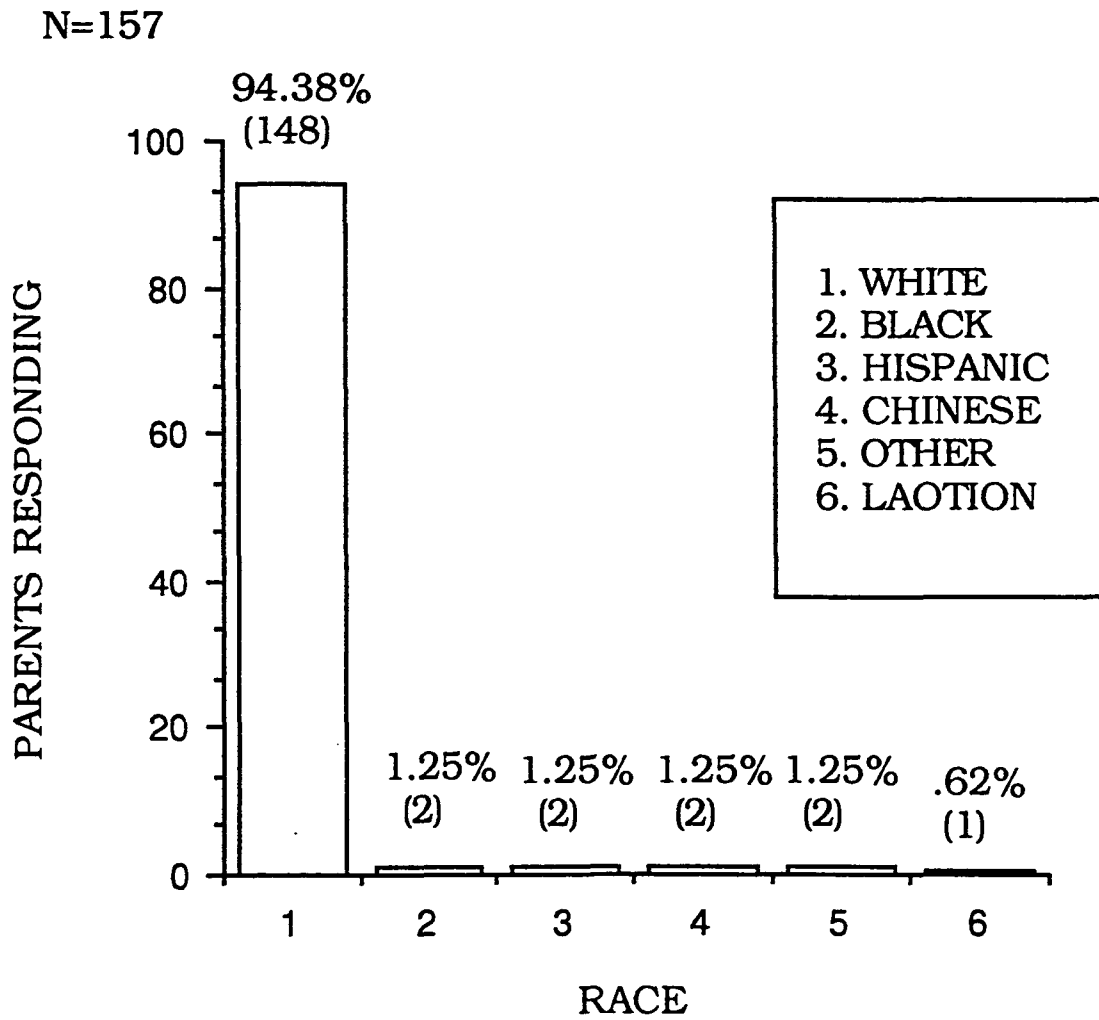


Figure 12. Parent's race

(4) Families yearly gross income varied from less than \$5,000.00 to more than \$60,000.00. Thirty percent (47; 30.1 %) of the respondents recorded earnings of \$46,000.00-\$59,999.00. Nearly twenty percent (31; 19.9 %) made more than \$60,000.00 a year. Nine percent (14; 9.0 %) recorded earnings of \$5,000.00 to \$19,999.00 annually. Forty-one percent (64; 41.0%) earned between 20,000.00-45,999.00 (Figure 13).

(5) Figure 14 shows family size. The majority of the families had only two children 53.7%).

(6) Eighty-one percent (88; 54.3 %) of parent respondents had attended college. Twenty-seven percent (44; 27.2 %) had taken graduate courses. Seventeen percent (28; 17.3%) did not attend school beyond high school.(Figure 15).

(7) The greatest percentage of the parents surveyed (105; 65.3 %) estimated that their children watched zero to two hours of television a day on school days. Another twenty-four percent (39; 24.1%) reported that their children watched three-four hours daily. Ten percent (17; 10.6 %) felt that their children watched anywhere from five to more than eight hours a day, Monday thru Friday (Figure 16).

(8) Parents' estimates of hours their children spent watching television on weekends (Saturday and Sunday) varied. Six percent (9; 5.6 %) of the adults estimated that their children watched from between zero to two hours over the two day period. Sixty-one percent (41; 60.7%) felt their children watched three to five hours on the weekends. Approximately thirty-four percent (14; 33.8 %) felt that their children watched six or more hours on the weekends (Figure 17).

(9) Fifty-four percent (87; 53.7 %) of the adults surveyed said they subscribed to cable television (Figure 18).

(10) The largest percentage (41; 25.3 %) of parents listed their occupation as being in the field of education (Figure 19).

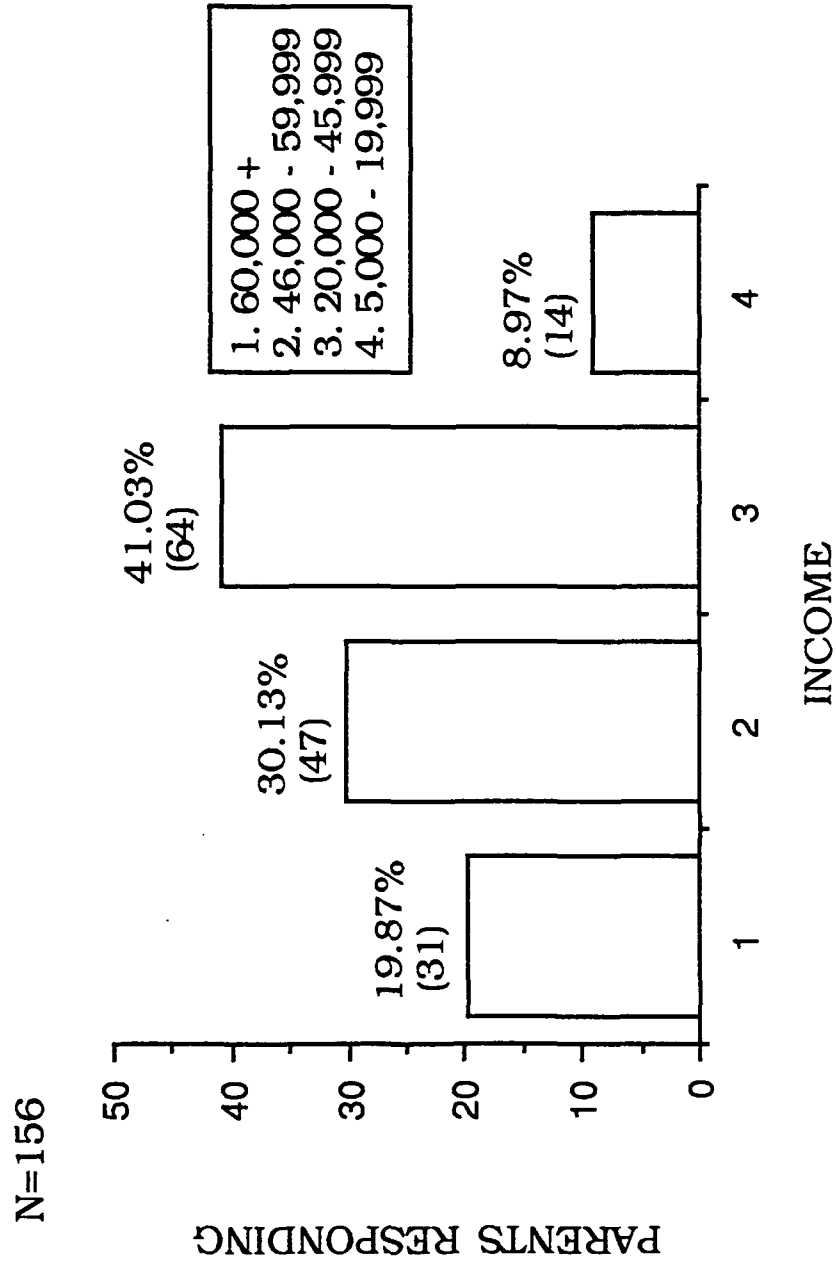


Figure 13. Family's yearly income

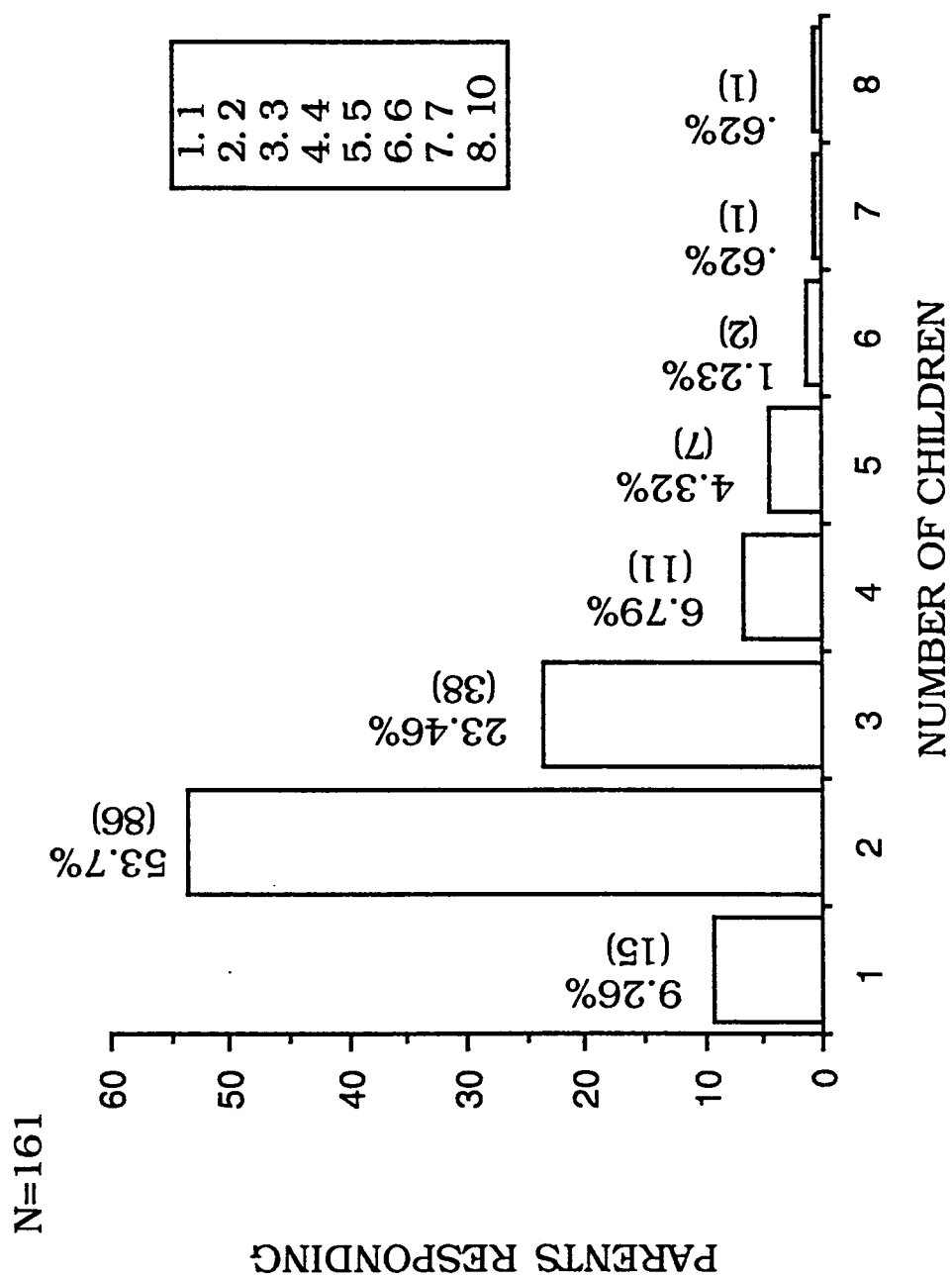


Figure 14. Family size

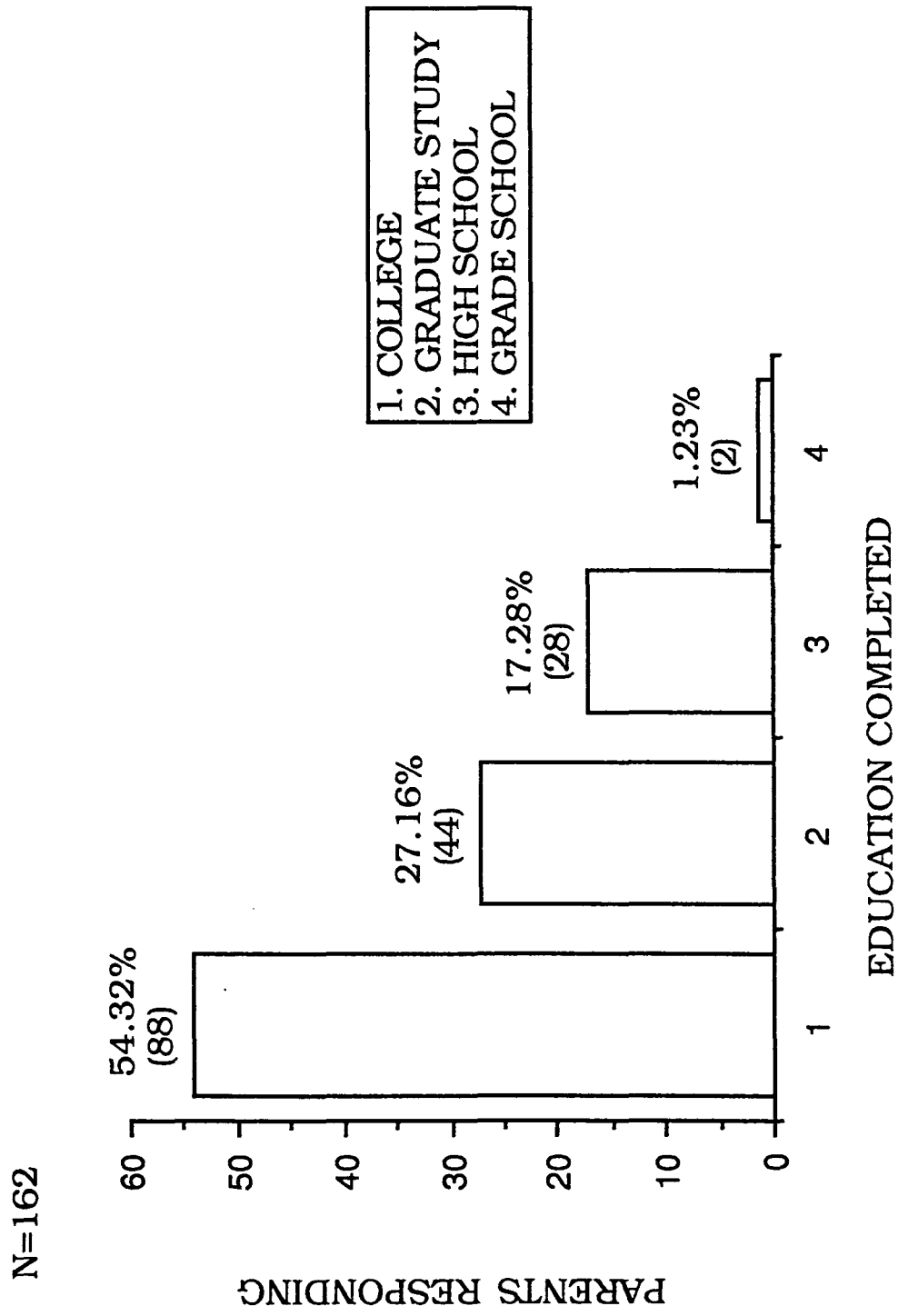


Figure 15. Parent's years of education

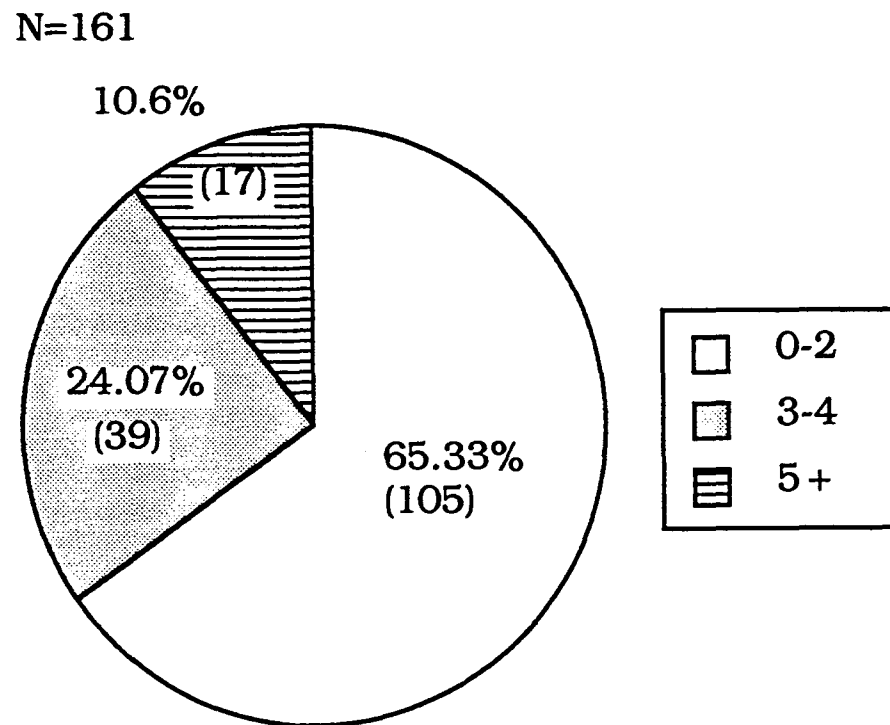


Figure 16. Parent's estimate of television hours children watched Monday-Friday



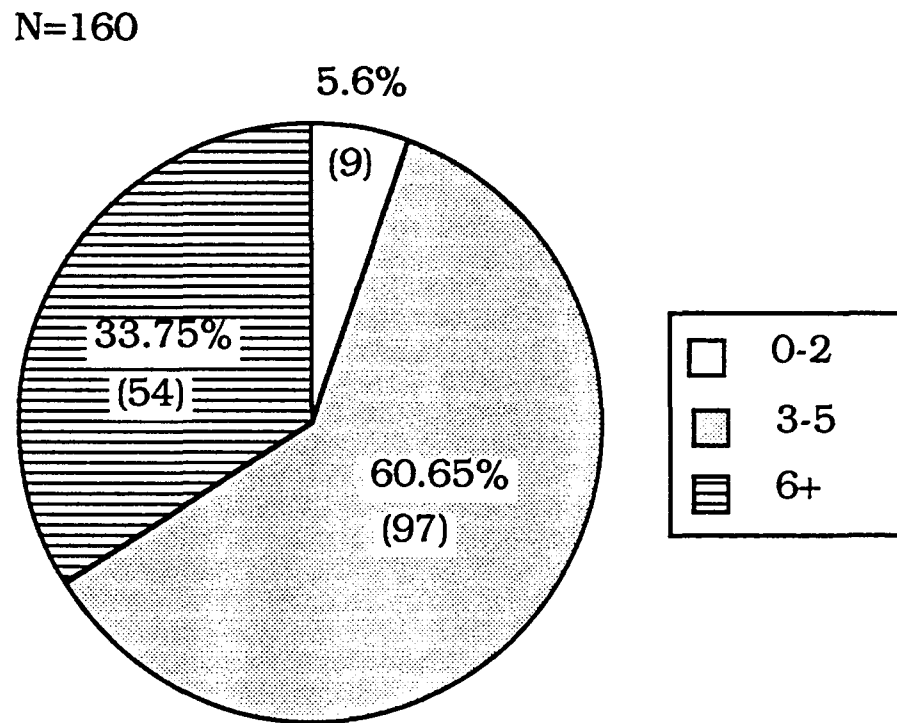


Figure 17. Parent's estimate of television hours children watched Saturday and Sunday

N=162

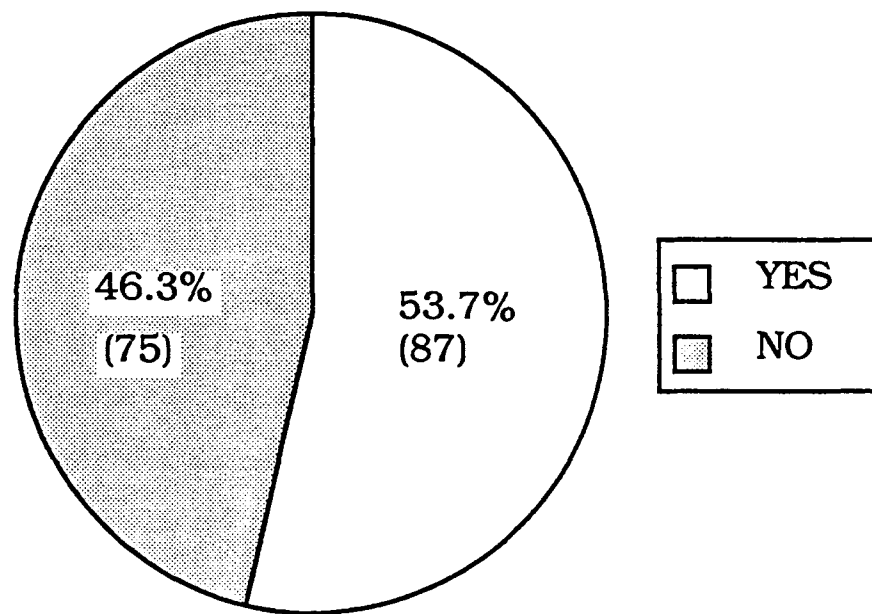


Figure 18. Cable television subscribers

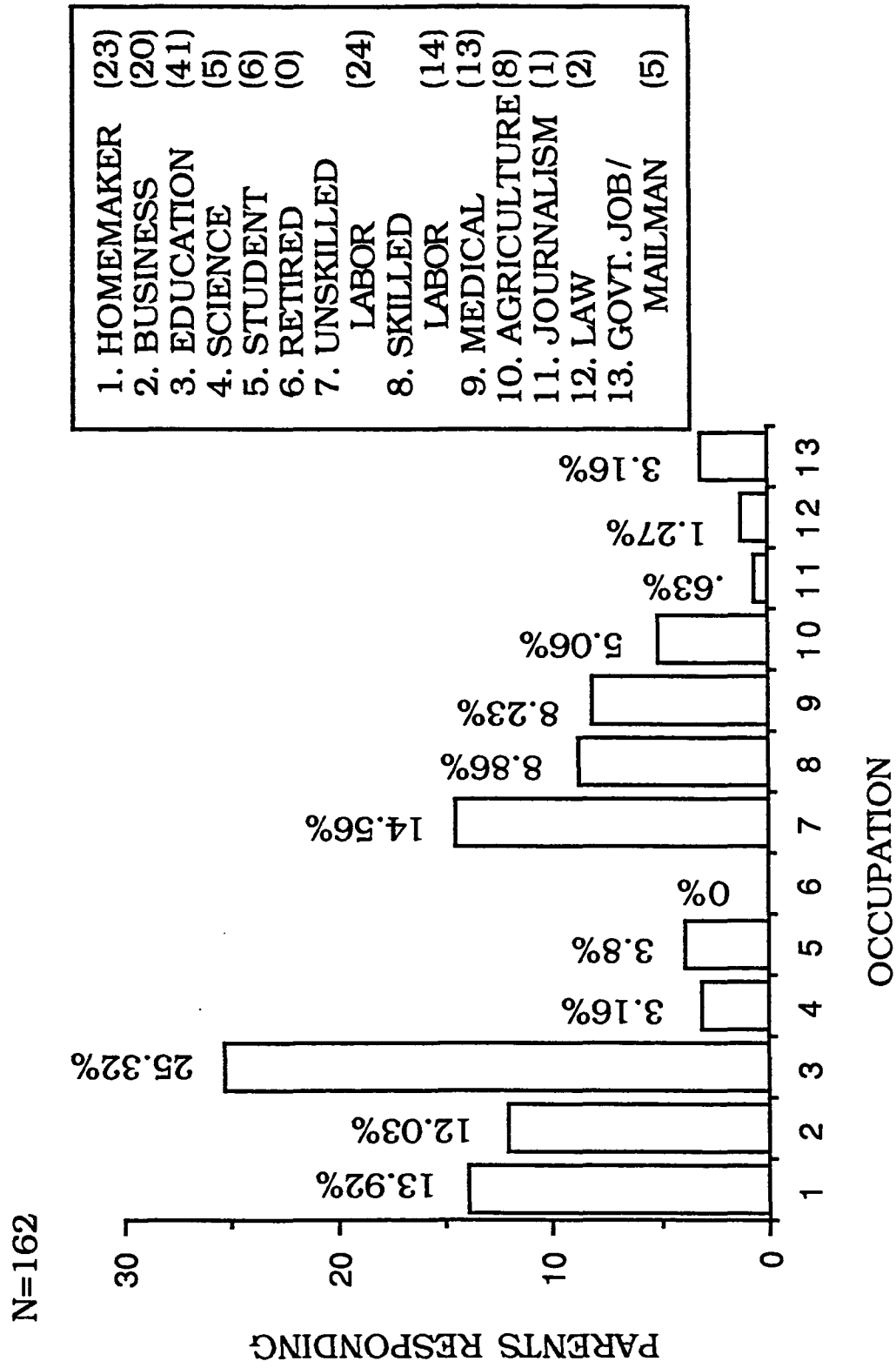


Figure 19. Parent's occupation

(11) Parents chose two activities that they felt their children spent the most time doing during their leisure time. Fifty-nine responses from the parents indicated that their children chose to watch television in their spare time. Sixty-seven responses indicated children spent time playing sports. Forty said that their children read. Sixty responses were marked to show that children liked to play with other things (friends, bikes).

See Table 2.

(12) Approximately ninety-eight percent (158; 97.5 %) of the parents felt their child enjoyed school. Slightly more than two percent (4; 2.5 %) stated their child disliked school (Figure 20).

(13) Fifty-four percent (87; 54.0 %) of the adults surveyed said their children watched good-quality programs on television most of the time. Forty-six percent (74; 46.0) felt their children did not watch good-quality programs. Parents commented on the fact that there were not a lot of good-quality programs on broadcast television to choose from (Figure 21).

## Part II CTF

The purpose of this study was to describe the attitudes of children aged 9-11, and their parents, from two school districts, towards favorite television characters and programs and the values they portrayed. Children and adults were asked to choose the response that best described how they felt about each of the 62 statements in Part Two of the CTF.

Table 2. What parents said their children chose to do in their spare time

Response	Number of responses
Study	17
Sports	67
Hobby	7
Reading	40
Watching T.V.	59
Playing	60
Chores/homework	3
Video games	16
Family	26
Other	<u>26</u>
Totals	321

N=162

(Each parent chose two activities)

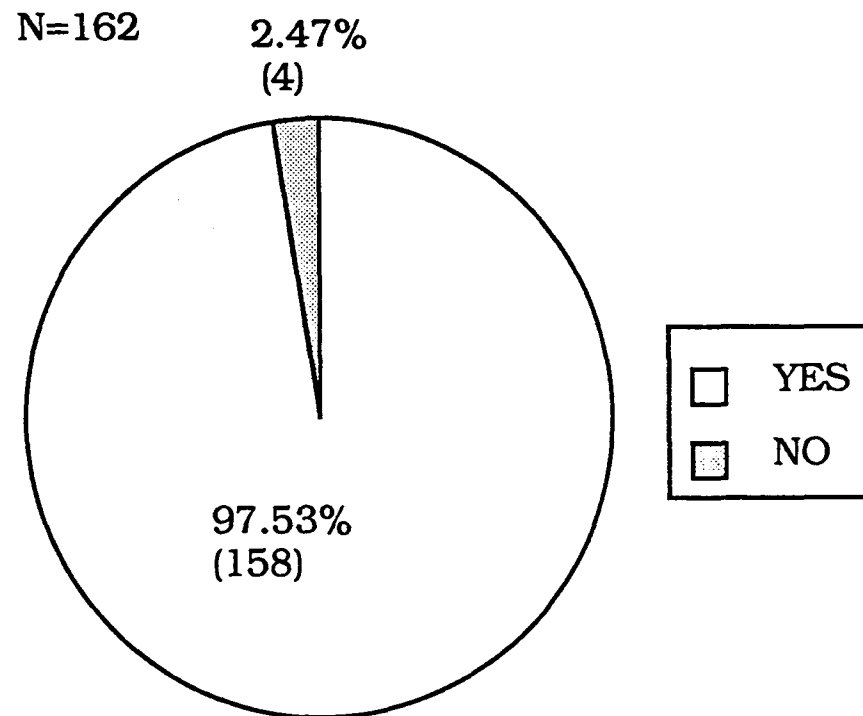


Figure 20. Parent's opinion about whether child likes school or not

N=161

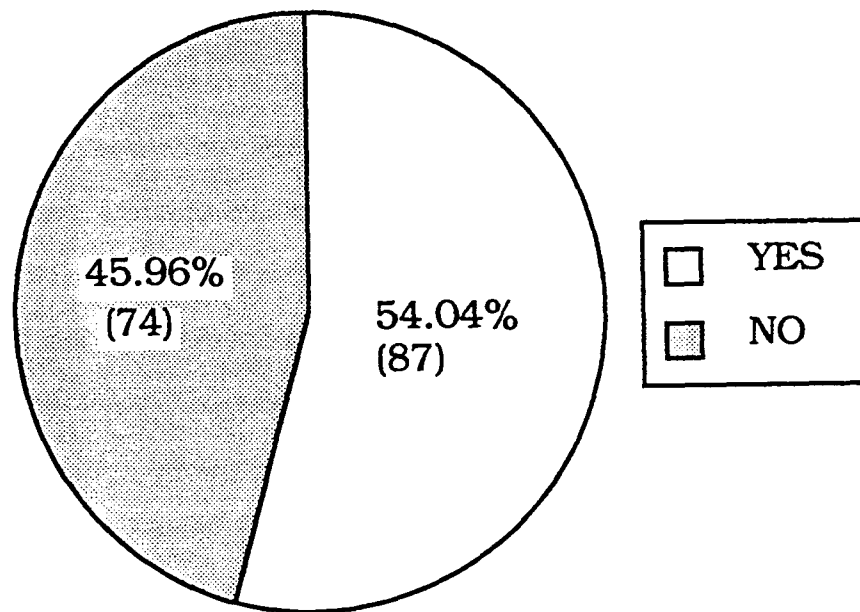


Figure 21. Parent's opinion of whether their child watches quality television

The following Likert-like agreement scale was used:

SA= Strongly Agree

A=Agree

U=Undecided

D=Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

The 62 statements on the adult and children's CTF were placed into five attitude categories or subtests, in order to answer research questions 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. The research questions and their relationship to the attitude categories were described in Chapter III. Each subtest was considered to be a measure of adult or children's attitude constructs. The constructs were used to compare attitudes of adults and children.

The reliability for each subtest was computed (Table 3). A reliability coefficient of above .30 was considered acceptable. Therefore, it was determined that the subtests of the CTF were useful tests of student and adult attitudes.

#### Attitudes of Children and their Parents

##### Parent and Children's perceptions of honesty as portrayed by television characters

Subtest: What are adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value (Honesty)?

Based on the results of Part Two of the CTF, the average of the subtest Honesty (36.5) indicated that students and adults, as a whole held a negative attitude toward character portrayals of honesty (Table 3). The highest possible score was 65. A score of 33 or above



Table 3. Attitudes of parents and children towards television character's portrayal of five different values by value subtests<sup>a</sup>

Subtest	Number responding	Possible range of scores (Actual)	average score	SD	Highest possible score	Reliability of subtest
Tolerance and compassion		12-60 (30-55)			60	.60
Parents	121		33.14	5.70		
Children	187		34.06	5.16		
Decency		12-60 (14-58)			60	.38
Parents	121		32.73	4.72		
Children	187		35.23	4.37		
Self-discipline		13-65 (25-53)			65	.50
Parents	121		37.07	5.04		
Children	187		39.04	5.09		
Kindness		12-60 (21-60)			60	.66
Parents	121		35.95	6.17		
Children	187		37.64	5.43		
Honesty		13-65 (13-50)			65	.48
Parents	121		34.81	4.85		
Children	187		37.54	4.85		

<sup>a</sup> Higher score = more negative attitude

Tolerance and compassion = Parents' and children's perception of television character's portrayal of the values tolerance and compassion

Decency = Parents' and children's perception of television character's portrayal of the value decency

Self-discipline = Parents' and children's perception of television character's portrayal of the value self-discipline

Kindness = Parents' and children's perception of television character's portrayal of the value kindness

Honesty = Parents' and children's perception of television character's portrayal of the value honesty

indicated a negative attitude. Parent's average score was (34.8) and the children's average was slightly more negative at (37.5).

Parent and children's perceptions of decency as portrayed by television characters

Subtest: What are adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value (Decency)?

Based on the results of Part Two of the CTF, the average of the subtest Decency (34.2) indicated that students and adults, as a whole held a negative attitude toward character portrayals of Decency (Table 3). The highest possible score was 60. A score of 30 or above indicated a negative attitude. Parent's average was (32.7). The children's average was again more negative at (35.2).

Parent and children's perceptions of tolerance and compassion as portrayed by television characters

Subtest: What are parent and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value (Tolerance & Compassion)?

Based on the results of Part Two of the CTF, the average of the subtest Tolerance and Compassion (33.7) showed that children and parents held a negative attitude toward character portrayals of the value tolerance and compassion (Table 3). The highest possible score was 60. A score of 30 or above indicated a negative attitude. Parent's average score was (33.1). The children's average was (34.1).

Parent and children's perceptions of self-discipline as portrayed by television characters

Subtest: What are parent and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value (Self-Discipline)?

Based on the results of Part Two of the CTF, the average of the subtest Self-discipline (38.3) indicated that parent's and children held a negative attitude towards character's

portrayals of the value Self-discipline (Table 3). The highest possible score was 65. A score of 33 or above indicated a negative attitude. Parent's average score for this construct was (37.1). The children's average was (39.0).

#### Parent and children's perceptions of kindness as portrayed by television characters

Subtest: What are children and parent's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value (Kindness)?

Results of Part Two of the CTF indicate that the average of the subtest Kindness (37.0) showed that parents and children held a negative attitude toward character portrayals of the value kindness (Table 3). The highest possible score was 60. A score of 30 or more indicated a negative attitude. Parent's average score was (36.0). The children's average was (37.6).

### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics indicating children and parent characteristics and subtest value construct scores were examined to determine if further analyses were appropriate to explore the interrelationships and differences between variables (see Tables 4 and 5). The data were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation, then t-tests.

### Correlations

The Pearson product moment correlation technique was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the characteristics of child and parent scores of each subtest. Two correlation matrixes were computed. One for parents and one for children. The characteristics examined for the parents were (1) age, (2) parent's estimate of the number of

Table 4. Children's descriptive statistics

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	R
Age:	189	10.7	1.1	1.24
T.V. M.-F.:	189	3.6	1.9	.56
T.V. S.&S.:	189	4.4	2.2	.32
Siblings in family:	189	2.0	1.6	2.03
Attitude toward the value honesty:	187	37.5	4.8	-.63
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:	187	34.1	5.2	-.42
Attitude toward the value decency:	187	35.2	4.4	-.88
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:	187	39.0	5.1	-.17
Attitude toward the value kindness:	187	37.6	5.4	-.52

Table 5. Parents' descriptive statistics

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	R
Age:	156	39.1	6.0	1.49
T.V. M.-F.:	162	2.5	1.8	1.77
T.V. S.&S.:	162	4.2	2.2	1.45
Number of children in family:	162	2.5	1.2	2.24
Attitude toward the value honesty:	121	34.8	4.9	-.85
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:	121	33.1	5.7	-1.08
Attitude toward the value decency:	121	32.7	4.7	-1.00
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:	121	37.1	5.0	.20
Attitude toward the value kindness:	121	36.0	6.2	-.79

hours of television their child watched Monday-Friday, (3) parent's estimate of the number of hours of television their child watched Saturday and Sunday, (4) the value honesty, (5) the value tolerance & compassion, (6) the value decency, (7) the value self-discipline, (8) the value kindness, and (9) parent's income.

The correlation matrix (Table 6) showed a significant relationship between parent's age and their estimate of the number of hours their child watched television Monday-Friday ( $p > .01$ ). Younger parents tend to feel their children watch more hours of television.

A positive correlation of (.53) between the two characteristics, television watched Monday-Friday and television watched Saturday-Sunday, were significantly related ( $p > .01$ ). When parents perceived that their children watched more hours of television Monday-Friday they also perceived that their children watched more hours on Saturday and Sunday.

Parent's income and age showed a positive correlation ( $r = .26$ ) which indicated a significant relationship ( $p > .01$ ). Older parents earned more money. All five value constructs showed moderate positive relationships at a significant level ( $p > .01$ ). This indicated that respondents tended to rate all the value constructs somewhat similarly.

The characteristics examined for the children were (1) age, (2) child's estimate of the number of hours of television he/she watched Monday-Friday, (3) child's estimate of the number of hours of television he/she watched Saturday-Sunday, (4) the number of siblings the child had, (5) the value honesty, (6) the value tolerance & compassion, (7) the value decency, (8) the value self-discipline, and (9) the value kindness.

The correlation matrix (Table 7) showed a moderate positive relationship ( $r = .52$ ) between the number of hours children estimated they watched television Monday-Friday and hours watched on Saturday and Sunday ( $p > .01$ ). The more hours a child watched TV Monday-Friday the more they watched on Saturday and Sunday.



Table 6. Correlation matrix: Degree of relationship between characteristics of parents and score of subtests of attitude toward values television characters portray on television

N=109	Age	T.V. Mon.-Fri.	T.V. Sat.&Sun.	Parents' Income	Honesty
Age		-.14*	-.03	.22*	-.06
T.V. M.-F.			.49*	-.24*	-.09
T.V. S.&S.				-.24*	.08
Parents' Income					.01
Honesty					
Tolerance & Compassion					
Decency					
Self- discipline					
Kindness					

\*Significance level  $p < .05$

Age - Age of parents responding

T.V. M.-F. - Television parents estimated children watched  
monday thru friday

T.V. S.&S. - Television parents estimated children watched  
saturday and sunday

Parents' income - Parents' annual household income

Honesty - Parents' perception of television character's  
portrayal of the value honesty



Tolerance & Compassion	Decency	Self- discipline	Kindness	N=109
-.06	-.01	-.04	-.13*	Age
.00	-.09	-.05	.01	T.V. M.-F.
.11	.02	.08	.11	T.V. S.&S.
-.06	.03	-.10	-.03	Parents' Income
.64*	.63*	.66*	.66*	Honesty
	.66*	.69*	.71*	Tolerance & Compassion
		.58*	.68*	Decency
			.69*	Self- discipline
				Kindness

Tolerance & Compassion - Parents' perception of television  
character's portrayal of the values  
tolerance and compassion

Decency - Parents' perception of television character's  
portrayal of the value decency

Self-discipline - Parents' perception of television character's  
portrayal of the value self-discipline

Kindness - Parents' perception of television character's  
portrayal of the value kindness



**Table 7. Correlation matrix: Degree of relationship between characteristics of children and score of subtests of attitude toward values television characters portray on television**

N=186	Age	Children's grade level	T.V. Mon.-Fri.	T.V. Sat.&Sun.	Siblings
Age		.86*	-.03	-.04	.07
Children's grade level			-.02	-.03	.08
T.V. M.-F.				.52*	-.08
T.V. S.&S.					.05
Siblings					
Honesty					
Tolerance & Compassion					
Decency					
Self-discipline					
Kindness					

\*Significance level  $p < .05$

Age - Age of children responding

Children's grade level - Children's grade level in school

T.V. M.-F. - Television children estimated they watched monday thru friday

T.V. S.&S. - Television children estimated they watched saturday and sunday

Siblings - Children's number of brothers and sisters

Honesty	Tolerance & Compassion	Decency	Self- discipline	Kindness	N=186
-.10	-.16	-.18*	-.08	-.10	Age
.14	-.20*	-.19*	-.10	-.09	Children's grade level
.02	-.01	.07	.05	-.01	T.V. M.-F.
.03	.06	.09	.03	.03	T.V. S.&S.
.02	-.07	-.12	-.01	-.11	Siblings
	.38*	.41*	.40*	.47*	Honesty
		.59*	.49*	.47*	Tolerance & Compassion
			.50*	.59*	Decency
				.58*	Self- discipline
					Kindness

Honesty - Children's perception of television character's portrayal of the value honesty

Tolerance & compassion - Children's perception of television character's  
portrayal of the values tolerance and compassion

Decency - Children's perception of television character's portrayal of the value decency

Self-discipline - Children's perception of television character's portrayal of the  
value self-discipline

Kindness - Children's perception of television character's portrayal of the value  
kindness

There was a negative relationship ( $r = -.16$ ) between child's age and the value tolerance & compassion ( $p = .03$ ). Younger children rated this value more negatively. A negative relationship ( $r = -.18$ ) existed between child's age and the value decency, as well ( $p = .01$ ). Younger children rated this more negatively.

All five subtests of the attitude constructs showed moderate positive relationships at a significant level ( $p > .01$ ). This shows that the respondent tended to rate all values somewhat similarly.

#### t-tests

The t-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference between adult and children perceptions of the character portrayals of values on television. Also analyzed were different perceptions based on (1) gender, (2) whether the child's parent felt their child liked school or not (3) whether the child said he/she liked school or not, (4) the child's grade level in school, (5) whether the child was first born or not, (6) whether the child lived in Ames or Indianola, (7) Where the parents lived Ames or Indianola, (8) and adult's poor ratings of the quality of the programming their children watched, as depicted by their subtest scores.

Table 6 shows that the average scores of adults' and children's attitudes towards character portrayals of the value "honesty" were significantly different. The level of significance ( $p$ ) between adult and children were lower than .05 ( $p < .01$ ); therefore, there was a significant difference. The value "decency" was perceived by adults and children at a significantly different level ( $p < .01$ ). Children's perceptions were significantly less favorable or more negative than their parents. The average scores of parent and children's attitudes towards character portrayals of the value construct "self-discipline" was at a

Table 8. t-test: Parents' or children's perception of attitude toward television character's portrayal of five different values <sup>a</sup>

Subtest	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-value	p
Attitude toward the value honesty:					
Parents	121	34.81	4.85	4.84	<.01*
Children	187	37.55	4.85		
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:					
Parents	121	33.15	5.69	1.46	.14
Children	187	34.06	5.16		
Attitude toward the value decency:					
Parents	121	32.74	4.72	4.75	<.01*
Children	187	35.24	4.38		
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:					
Parents	121	37.07	5.04	3.32	<.01*
Children	187	39.04	5.10		
Attitude toward the value kindness:					
Parents	121	35.95	6.18	2.54	.01*
Children	187	37.65	5.43		

<sup>a</sup> Higher score = more negative attitude

\*Significance level  $p < .05$

significantly different level ( $p < .01$ ). Children's perception of character's portrayal of self-discipline were more negative than their parents.

Children's attitude towards character's portrayal of "kindness" were significantly more negative than their parents ( $p < .01$ ). In all instances children rated television character's portrayals of the value constructs more negatively than parents. Children perceived the characters portrayals as being less honest, less decent, less self-disciplined, and displaying less kindness than parents perceived them.

Table 9 shows that adult male and female perceptions of the value constructs indicated that there was not a significant difference in their perception of the five value constructs. Adult male perceptions of the characters' portrayals of the values on television were similar to adult female perceptions.

Boys and girls, on the other hand, showed a significant difference in perceptions of the value constructs, Tolerance & Compassion ( $p < .01$ ), Self-discipline ( $p = .02$ ), and Kindness ( $p < .01$ ). In each instance the boys rated the value more negatively (see Table 10).

Table 11 shows that the children who stated that they liked school rated television more positively than the children who disliked school. There was a significant difference in their responses in regards to the values honesty ( $p = .04$ ), and tolerance & compassion ( $p = .03$ ).

Table 12 shows there was no significant difference in child's responses to the five value areas in relation to what grade they were in. The children were either in fourth or fifth grade.

Table 13 shows first born children perceived the television characters to be less honest ( $p = .05$ ) than non, first born children. There was not a significant difference in any of the other value constructs in relation to being first born or not.

Table 9. t-test: Parent's gender and attitude toward television character's portrayal of five different values <sup>a</sup>

Subtest	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-value	p
Attitude toward the value honesty:					
Male	54	34.74	5.09	-.15	.85
Female	66	34.88	4.72		
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:					
Male	54	32.83	5.73	-.50	.62
Female	66	33.36	5.73		
Attitude toward the value decency:					
Male	54	32.43	5.24	-.75	.46
Female	66	33.08	4.25		
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:					
Male	54	37.28	4.97	.25	.79
Female	66	37.05	5.05		
Attitude toward the value kindness:					
Male	54	35.70	6.35	-.38	.71
Female	66	36.14	6.11		

<sup>a</sup> Higher score = more negative attitude  
 \*Significance level  $p < .05$



Table 10. t-test: Children's gender and attitude toward television character's portrayal of five different values<sup>a</sup>

Subtest	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-value	p
Attitude toward the value honesty:					
Male	88	38.25	5.57	1.89	.06
Female	99	36.92	4.03		
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:					
Male	88	35.72	5.81	4.32	<.01*
Female	99	32.60	3.99		
Attitude toward the value decency:					
Male	88	35.74	4.78	1.49	.13
Female	99	34.79	3.95		
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:					
Male	88	39.98	5.42	2.39	.02*
Female	99	38.21	4.66		
Attitude toward the value kindness:					
Male	88	38.76	5.94	2.69	<.01*
Female	99	36.66	4.74		

<sup>a</sup> Higher score = more negative attitude

\*Significance level  $p < .05$

Table 11. t-test: Children's liking of school and attitude toward television character's portrayal of five different values<sup>a</sup>

Subtest	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-value	p
Attitude toward the value honesty:					
Like school	144	37.15	4.17	-2.08	.04*
Do not like school	43	38.88	6.51		
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:					
Like school	144	33.63	4.56	-2.15	.03*
Do not like school	43	35.53	6.66		
Attitude toward the value decency:					
Like school	144	35.15	4.21	-.51	.62
Do not like school	43	35.53	4.94		
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:					
Like school	144	38.79	4.90	-1.23	.22
Do not like school	43	39.88	5.69		
Attitude toward the value kindness:					
Like school	144	37.24	5.04	-1.88	.06
Do not like school	43	39.00	6.44		

<sup>a</sup> Higher score = more negative attitude  
 \*Significance level  $p < .05$

Table 12. t-test: Child's grade in school and attitude toward television character's portrayal of five different values <sup>a</sup>

Subtest	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-value	p
Attitude toward the value honesty:					
4th grade	85	37.62	5.56	-.56	.58
5th grade	82	38.02	3.45		
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:					
4th grade	85	34.54	4.82	.22	.81
5th grade	82	34.38	4.85		
Attitude toward the value decency:					
4th grade	85	35.60	4.55	.21	.81
5th grade	82	35.46	3.68		
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:					
4th grade	85	38.68	5.37	-1.71	.09
5th grade	82	39.99	4.47		
Attitude toward the value kindness:					
4th grade	85	37.29	5.53	-1.69	.09
5th grade	82	38.63	4.65		

<sup>a</sup> Higher score = more negative attitude  
 \*Significance level  $p < .05$

Table 13. t-test: First born children versus later born siblings and attitude toward television character's portrayal of five different values <sup>a</sup>

Subtest	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-value	p
Attitude toward the value honesty:					
First born	95	37.82	4.99	.79	.44
Not first born	92	37.26	4.71		
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:					
First born	95	34.19	4.86	.34	.73
Not first born	92	33.93	5.47		
Attitude toward the value decency:					
First born	95	35.47	4.41	.76	.46
Not first born	92	34.99	4.35		
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:					
First born	95	39.23	5.01	.51	.61
Not first born	92	38.85	5.21		
Attitude toward the value kindness:					
First born	95	38.40	5.42	1.94	.05*
Not first born	92	36.87	5.36		

<sup>a</sup> Higher score = more negative attitude

\*Significance level  $p < .05$

Children from Ames generally rated television more negatively than Indianola children. Ames children perceived television character's portrayals of the values tolerance & compassion ( $p=.03$ ), decency ( $p<.01$ ), self-discipline ( $p=.01$ ), and kindness ( $p<.01$ ) at significantly more negative levels (see Table 14).

Parent's responses showed no significant difference in the value constructs in relation to where they lived. Parents lived in either Ames or Indianola (see table 15).

Table 16 shows parent's that stated their children watched good quality programs most of the time did not have significant perceptual differences in any of the value constructs, except for the value self-discipline ( $p=.03$ ), as compared to parents that felt their children did not watch quality programming most of the time. Parents stated several times that they felt there were very few quality programs being offered for children's viewing on broadcast television. Those that felt their children were watching poor quality television tended to view television more negatively than the other parents..

### Summary

The CTF questionnaire was distributed to 190 children and 378 adults (parents of the children polled) in eight elementary schools located in either Ames or Indianola. 189 children and 162 parents returned their CTF questionnaires. A profile of the adult and children respondents were discussed. Descriptive statistical results were presented. Attitudes of children and adults towards television character's portrayals of values on children's favorite television programs were correlated and analyzed using information from Part II of the CTF questionnaire. The attitudes of children and parents were reported. Results were presented and significant differences were stated.

Table 14. t-test: Homeschool of children and attitude toward television character's portrayal of five different values <sup>a</sup>

Subtest	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-value	p
Attitude toward the value honesty:					
Ames	127	37.65	4.66	.44	.66
Indianola	60	37.32	5.27		
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:					
Ames	127	34.62	4.53	2.17	.03*
Indianola	60	32.88	6.16		
Attitude toward the value decency:					
Ames	127	35.98	4.11	3.47	<.01*
Indianola	60	33.66	4.53		
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:					
Ames	127	39.69	5.20	2.54	.01*
Indianola	60	37.68	4.62		
Attitude toward the value kindness:					
Ames	127	38.61	5.00	3.63	<.01*
Indianola	60	35.62	5.78		

<sup>a</sup> Higher score = more negative attitude

\*Significance level  $p < .05$

Table 15. t-test: Hometown of parents and attitude toward television character's portrayal of five different values<sup>a</sup>

Subtest	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-value	p
Attitude toward the value honesty:					
Ames	75	35.35	5.35	1.56	.12
Indianola	46	33.93	3.79		
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:					
Ames	75	33.16	6.43	.03	.93
Indianola	46	33.13	4.29		
Attitude toward the value decency:					
Ames	75	33.11	5.24	1.11	.27
Indianola	46	32.13	3.70		
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:					
Ames	75	37.43	5.39	.98	.33
Indianola	46	36.50	4.42		
Attitude toward the value kindness:					
Ames	75	36.15	6.80	.45	.66
Indianola	46	35.63	5.04		

<sup>a</sup>Higher score = more negative attitude

\*Significance level  $p < .05$

Table 16. t-test: Parents' perception of quality of television (good, poor) and attitude toward television character's portrayal of five different values<sup>a</sup>

Subtest	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-value	p
Attitude toward the value honesty:					
Good	71	34.48	4.92	-.89	.38
Poor	50	35.28	4.76		
Attitude toward the value tolerance & compassion:					
Good	71	32.94	5.54	-.47	.64
Poor	50	33.44	5.95		
Attitude toward the value decency:					
Good	71	32.37	3.98	-.03	.31
Poor	50	33.26	5.62		
Attitude toward the value self-discipline:					
Good	71	36.24	4.67	-2.21	.03*
Poor	50	38.26	5.36		
Attitude toward the value kindness:					
Good	71	35.24	5.98	-1.52	.13
Poor	50	36.96	6.37		

<sup>a</sup> Higher score = more negative attitude

\*Significance level  $p < .05$



## CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS

### Introduction

A major concern of parents and others actively involved with children is the amount of time children are exposed to television and the content of the programs offered. Unfortunately, many children, allowed to spend hours in front of a television, base their perceptions of the world on what they have seen on television rather than their own interactions and activities.

The purpose of this study was to describe the attitudes of parents and children, aged nine-eleven, towards television character's portrayal of values on children's favorite television programs. Parents and children rated the value content of television programs and their perceptions were compared to see if any similarities or differences occurred.

Chapter V. reviews chapters I, II, and III. The sixteen research questions are restated. Data collected from the CTF questionnaire is reported in Chapter IV, the research questions and results are discussed. Conclusions and recommendations for further study are included.

### Review of Chapters I, II, and III

Research shows that television is a major social force that has profound effects on the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development of children. Research also suggests that children and adult's have distinguishable perceptual differences in relation to television viewing.

Five values considered necessary for children's continued "sound morality" and effective problem solving and decision making, were identified for use in this study. They are as follows:

DECENCY--To think and act in a fair and proper way. Being polite to others. To have and show good manners.

KINDNESS--Showing you care for others. Acting kindly towards others.

TOLERANCE & COMPASSION--To care deeply for and have an understanding of others. To accept others as they are no matter how they look, what color they are, or who their friends are. To be able to get along with others.

SELF-DISCIPLINE--Taking credit or blame for your own actions. Trying to become a better person.

HONESTY--Telling the truth and being honest. Others can trust you.

The five identified values were used to form five value constructs parents and children used when rating the value content of television programs. A CTF questionnaire was developed, administered, and analyzed to help discern perceptual differences in adults and children's television viewing.

#### Research questions

Sixteen research questions were developed in order to fulfill the purpose of this study.

They were:

- (1) What television programs and characters do children enjoy and spend time watching?
- (2) Do adults and children's perceptions differ when viewing the same television programs?

- (3) Do male adults and children perceive the value content of programs differently than their female counterparts?
- (4) Do children and parent's estimates of time children spend watching TV, at night and on weekends, differ?
- (5) Do children who watch more TV perceive the value content of the programs differently than adults and other children?
- (6) Do first born children perceive the value content of TV differently than later born children?
- (7) Do children prefer to watch TV over other spare time activity choices?
- (8) Do children who like school perceive the characters portrayal of the value content of programs differently than other children?
- (9) Do children who estimate their GPA higher perceive the character's portrayal of the value content of programs differently than other children?
- (10) Do parents and children's perceptual ratings differ in relation to where they live?
- (11) Do fourth graders rate television programs differently than fifth graders?
- (12) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value honesty, differ?
- (13) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value decency, differ?
- (14) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value tolerance and compassion, differ?

- (15) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value self-discipline, differ?
- (16) Do adults and children's perceptions of television character's portrayal of the value kindness, differ?

### Review of the Literature

The review of literature addressed three areas of concern for this study: (1) to explain how children learn socially (2) To investigate adult and children's perceptual differences when rating the value content of television programs. (3) and to examine televisions developmental impact on children.

Research shows that children do learn from and imitate behavior seen on television (Bandura; Brofenbrenner 1970; Almers 1971; Shemer 1979; Christenson 1985). Bandura's social learning theory (1977), explained how social learning resulted in behavior change, and how behavior change can occur from watching television.

Research also supported this study's assumption that television does have a perceptual affect on children's attitudes, values, and behaviors. It was shown that a child's perception of what characters are portraying effects how he or she internalizes the television characters actions.

Television does have an effect on children. Children are not capable of interpreting television as adults; adults can critique and analyze the content, tune out irrelevance (and commercials), and follow complicated sequences and character development; children can not (Report on understanding the effects of television by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1989).

### Methodology

The CTF questionnaire was developed and pilot tested following the procedure outlined in Henerson, Morris, and Fitz-Simmons (1978). The reliability and validity of the CTF was determined to be acceptable. All items on the CTF were directly related to the research questions. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part One was designed to identify the demographic background and characteristics of the children and parents. The children's CTF asked questions related to their background and was slightly different from the parents CTF Part One, which asked questions related to the parents background. Part Two of the CTF questionnaire was made up of identical statements for the children and parents to respond to. The purpose of Part Two was to describe children's and parent's attitudes toward character's portrayal of values on television programs. Part Two used a Likert-type agreement scale. One open-ended question was included. Part Two consisted of 62 questions. Three school districts were chosen to participate in the study based on their demographic location. Two gave their consent to participate, Ames and Indianola school districts. Administrators were contacted by phone and four school sites from each location were selected to be polled. The entire fourth and fifth grade population from these eight sites were polled. The children then carried two questionnaires home for their parents or guardians to fill out. Parents had the option of either returning their questionnaires to school via their child or by mailing their responses to the researcher.

### Discussion of Results

The purpose of Part One of the CTF on the children's questionnaire was to provide a profile of the sample in order to answer research questions 1 and 3-11. Based on frequency

distributions computed for each question, the average fourth or fifth grade child, aged 9-11 could generally be described as follows:

- (1) No one sex predominated the enrollment.
- (2) The student was nine, ten, or eleven years old.
- (3) The student was either a fourth or a fifth grader.
- (4) The student attended a school in either Ames or Indianola school districts.
- (5) The student's race was predominantly white. Eight percent were minority.
- (6) Child's GPA was not analyzed because children were not graded on a four point scale.
- (7) Not all students estimated that they watched the same number of hours of television a day.
- (8) Most of the students had siblings. Eight percent did not.
- (9) Half of the students were the oldest child in their family.
- (10) The two most popular activities students chose to do in their spare time was (1) watching TV and (2) playing sports.
- (11) Most of the students said they liked school.
- (12) The students rated these 5 programs as their favorites: (1) The Simpsons (2) Full House (3) Growing Pains (4) The Cosby Show, and (5) Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

#### Characteristics of parents

The purpose of Part One of the CTF on the parent's questionnaire was to provide a profile of the sample in order to answer research questions 3, 4, 5, and 10. Based on frequency

distributions computed for each question, the average parent could generally be described as follows:

- (1) No one sex predominated.
- (2) The parent's age was between 28-57, the average parent's age was 43.
- (3) The parent's race was predominantly white. Six percent were minority
- (4) Parents earned from less than \$5,000.00 to more than \$60,000.00.
- (5) Most of the parent's attended college (eighty-three percent).
- (6) Parents' estimate of hours of television that their children watched, a day, differed between them.
- (7) Slightly over half of the parents subscribed to cable television, fifty-four percent.
- (8) Parent's occupations varied.
- (9) Parent's felt the two most popular activities their children chose to do in their spare time was (1) playing sports and (2) playing with other things (friends, bikes).
- (10) Most of the parents felt their child liked school (ninety-eight percent).
- (11) Half of the parents felt their child watched good quality television most of the time.

Part One of the CTF questionnaire results identified four groups adult male, adult female, child male, and child female. The attitudes of these four groups were compared.

### Attitudes of children

The results from Part Two of the CTF were used to describe the attitudes of children toward television character's portrayal of values on television programs. Each of the 62 statements were placed into five individual subtests measuring a different value construct. Each construct related to specific research questions and were examined separately. Using the t-test, several significant differences between parent and children's responses were found.

The results showed that children rated the value constructs Honesty, Decency, Self-Discipline, and Kindness of the characters of their favorite TV shows, significantly more negatively than their parents. Children rated the characters as being less honest, not as decent, not as self-disciplined, and less kind than their parents (Table 8).

Male children rated the value constructs Tolerance & Compassion, Self Discipline, and Kindness significantly more negatively than female children. The boys perceived the characters differently than the females. The boys rated the characters as being less tolerant and compassionate, less self-disciplined, and less kind than the girls rated them (Table 10).

The children that stated they did not like school rated the value constructs Honesty and Tolerance & Compassion significantly more negatively than the children who stated they did like school. The children that did not like school rated the television characters as being not as honest and not as tolerant & compassionate (Table 11).

There was no difference between the way fourth and fifth graders rated the character's portrayal of values on television. The children in different grade levels did not perceive the programs differently (Table 12).



First born children rated the value construct Kindness significantly more negatively than children that were not first born. They perceived the television character's portrayal as being less kind than the children who were not first born (Table 13).

The results also showed significant differences in the way Ames children rated the television programs compared to children from Indianola. Ames children rated the value constructs Tolerance & Compassion, Decency, Self-Discipline, and Kindness significantly more negatively than children from Indianola. Ames children perceived the television characters as being less kind, less self-disciplined, less decent, and not as tolerant and compassionate as the Indianola children perceived them to be (Table 14).

The results of the CTF showed that children perceived television character's portrayal of values on television differently.

#### Attitudes of parents

The results from Part Two of the CTF were used to describe the attitudes of parents toward television character's portrayal of values on television programs. Each of the 62 statements were placed into five individual subtests measuring a different value construct. The statements were the same statements the children responded to. Each construct related to specific research questions and were examined separately.

The results showed that adult male and adult female respondents did not rate television character's portrayal of the value constructs differently. Their perceptions were similar. Whether the parent were from Indianola or Ames, also did not show a difference in their ratings of television programs.

Results did show a significant difference in parent's ratings of the value construct Self-Discipline in relation to whether they felt their child watched poor quality television programs most of the time. The parents that felt their child watched poor quality

television most of the time rated the value self-discipline significantly more negatively than parents who felt their children watched good quality programs most of the time.

#### Relationship between variables

The relationship between variables were analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlation. Although no relationship between student or parent characteristics and subtest scores were high enough to make good group predictions, some of the relationships were significant above the .05 level.

Table 6 shows a very slight positive relationship between parents income and, child's age ( $r=.22$ ). As children get older parents income increases. Parent's income and the amount of television they thought their children watched Monday-Friday ( $r=-.24$ ) and on Saturday and Sunday ( $r=-.24$ ) showed very slight negative relationships. TV watched Monday-Friday was slightly correlated with TV watched on Saturday and Sunday ( $r=.49$ ). The more television parents thought their child watched throughout the week, the more television they thought their child watched on the weekends. The correlations between the value construct subtests showed predictable positive relationships between each other and emphasized their similar association.

Table 7 shows the highest correlation was between child's age and child's grade level in school ( $r=.86$ ). Obviously as child's age increased their grade level in school increased. Again, the correlations between the value construct subtests showed predictable positive relationships and emphasized their similar association. The amount of television children estimated they watched Monday-Friday was correlated with the amount they estimated they watched on Saturday and Sunday ( $r=.52$ ).

### Suggestions for Future Research

There is a need for additional research studying the effect television has on children. Better television programming should be demanded by parents. Parents should teach their children to be television wise so that character's portrayals of values and program's plots can be seen through critical eyes.

More research should be conducted to investigate the amount of time children spend watching television and what effect this has on children's social and academic learning. Adults and children's perceptions should be further investigated to discover where differences lie in forming their moral attitudes.

Because research has shown that children do learn and model behaviors from television, it would be very helpful to parents and teachers to know which shows are conveying which values. Parents have their own ideas about which shows are appropriate or inappropriate for their children, there are many other parents that do not watch the television shows that are popular with children, therefore, some knowledge of children's and adult's perceptual differences when viewing television would be helpful to use in selecting programs to be viewed by children.

Some parents indicated that IPTV or The Children's Network usually showed good quality television programs. They felt comfortable letting their children watch the programs on these channels without feeling they had to preview the subject matter first. More high quality programs could be identified for parents and educators if a rating system was devised.

This study looked at children's perceptions of character's portrayal of values as depicted on popular children's programs and conclusions were drawn from the information gathered. Children also spend a lot of time watching programs made with an adult

audience in mind. Children's perceptions of character's portrayals may be heightened by the increased complexity of the plots and violence in these "adult" programs. Parent's might see character's portrayal differently based on the audience the television program is written for.

Research has shown that parental intervention during television viewing can encourage children to be more critical viewers. Parent's can help children question the truthfulness of the character's actions and help clarify complex plots.

Children identify with same age models and are more likely to imitate their behaviors and mannerisms. When children were asked to name their favorite television characters on the F Survey the results showed that children overwhelmingly chose children actors (1) DJ on Full House, (2) Kirk Cameron on Growing Pains, (3) Bart Simpson on The Simpsons, and (4) Michelangelo on Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

Knowing that adult's and children's perceptions differ about television may not enable parents or educators to control the value content of television, but it might enable them to help their children become more critical viewers. Parents could point out the effects of television to their children and encourage them to seek other spare time activities that would help them grow into responsible, prosocial, productive adults.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to describe the attitudes of children, aged 9-11, and their parents toward television character's portrayals of values on children's favorite television programs, so that perceptual differences between adults and children could be compared. Sixteen research questions were formulated that addressed the purpose of this study.

A questionnaire (CTF) was developed to collect data related to the research questions. The CTF was pilot-tested and distributed to eight fourth or fifth grade classrooms in two school districts. Data was collected from 189 children and 162 adults (the children's parents). A profile of the average child and parent were compiled. The data from the CTF were analyzed to provide a description of the attitudes of children, aged 9-11, and their parents toward television character's portrayal of values on children's favorite television programs.

This study has determined that children and parents do perceive TV programs differently. Children tended to rate character's portrayals of the television programs value content more negatively than their parents. They perceived the character's to be less honest, not as decent, more unkind, and less self-disciplined. Male children tended to rate the characters more negatively than female children. The children who stated they did not like school rated characters more negatively than the children that stated they did like school. Ames children rated four out of the five values more negatively than Indianola children.

More research needs to be conducted on television's effect on children. Parents and educators need to become more involved in the selection and monitoring of television programs watched by children.

Adults need to recognize that caring, interactive adults are far more important in shaping their child's views and behaviors than television programs--regardless how fast paced and clever they may seem (Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, 1989).

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A special thank you to my wonderful husband Jim, who stood by my side, encouraged me, and helped me every step of the way. His belief in my abilities was a source of strength which carried me through.

To my son Benjamin, who brightened my days with his love. I thank him for his patience and humor.

I wish to thank the other members of my Program of Study Committee, Dr. Sedahlia Crase and Dr. Lynn Glass for their interest and suggestions.

I would also like to thank Indianola and Ames school district's students, parents, and administrators for their willingness to participate in the study.

**APPENDIX A. DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMATION REQUESTED**

**Application to Conduct Research**

Ames Community Schools  
120 South Kellogg  
Ames, Iowa 50010

Date: 4/18/90Name of Researcher(s) Lori Perkins-DetrickAddress of principal researcher 201 NE 12th Street Place #2  
Ankeny, IA 50021Telephone number of principal researcher ( 515 ) 965-1895Institution Iowa State UniversityGrade level(s) of students involved 4th, 5th, 7th, and 8thAnticipated number of students involved 200-250Form(s) of data collected (e.g., questionnaire, video tape, interview) QuestionnaireDate of first contact with students May 2, 1990Date of last contact with students May 9, 1990Date by which **ALL** original data forms will be destroyed (e.g., questionnaires, video tapes)June 30, 1990

Have you received Human Subjects approval from your parent institution?

Check one: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO x (It has been reviewed and they are waiting for school consent forms.)

During the proposed research effort, will you be requesting any school records?

Check one: YES x NO \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, state specific records you plan to request. Enrollment records & addresses of parents that will be participating in the study.

Will this research require additional work for any teacher?

Check one: YES x NO \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how much time is anticipated? 15-20 minutes

Will this research require students to be absent from regular instruction?

Check one: YES x NO \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how much time per student? 15-20 minutes

I (We) hereby agree to follow the Guidelines for Conducting Research in the the conduct of my (our) proposed research in the Ames Community Schools.

Principal Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_<sup>0</sup>

Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

201 NE 12th St. Place  
Ankeny, IA 50021  
April 18, 1990

Dear Mr. Kiser,

Thank you for getting back to me so quickly in response to my thesis study. I am sending along more information, as you requested. The copies of the measurement instruments and questionnaires, to be used, have already been received by you. The research proposal can be located on pages 1 and 2, in the information enclosed with this letter. You will find the proposed timeline of all research efforts on pages 7-10.

I have applied for human subjects approval and have been informed that they need documentation first, from the actual schools where the study will be completed. After I receive your approval and letter of consent I can forward it to them. My study has already been reviewed by their committee and all systems are go, once they receive this requested item.

You showed some concern that the time involved for the children to fill out the questionnaire would be too lengthy. I will make an adjustment with the instrument, so that only half of the questionnaire will be filled out by the children instead of its entirety. This will reduce the time needed for completion, considerably.

I realize that I am requesting your approval, at a late date, and I appreciate your working with me under these hectic time constraints. I can have everything ready to administer two days after I receive your consent.

If you have any more questions or concerns, I can be reached at 965-1895.

Yours for your consideration!

LOUI PERKINS-DETRICK  
Iowa State University



# Ames Community Schools

April 26, 1990

Lori Perkins-Detrick  
201 N.E. 12th Street Place, #2  
Ankeny, Iowa 50021

Dear Ms. Perkins-Detrick:

Your request to conduct research in the Ames Community Schools has been approved for the following schools and grades:

<u>School</u>	<u>Grade(s)</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
Edwards Elementary	4th (2 sections)	Ron Meals	292-1033
Fellows Elementary	4th (1 section) 5th (2 sections)	Mary Delagardelle	232-1160
Roosevelt Elementary	4th (2 sections) 5th (2 sections)	Dallas Rust	232-7799
Sawyer Elementary	5th (2 sections)	Felicia Blacher-Rick	292-1542

Copies of your request to conduct research have been forwarded to the principals listed above and they will be expecting a call from you to plan the details of your data collection with them.

Good luck with your research efforts.

Very truly yours.

Dania S. Clark-Lempers, Ph.D.  
Program Evaluation Specialist

CC: Ad Hoc Committee to Review Research

## CHILDREN AND TELEVISION OPINION SURVEY<sup>117</sup>

Dear Parents,

You and your child (aged 9-14) have been selected as participants in a research study about television and children. The purpose of this study is to attempt to identify the attitudes that you and your child hold in relation to children's television viewing.

A survey and questionnaire will be issued to your child in school on Friday, May 11th, and Monday, May 14th. It will take your child 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire on the first day and 20 minutes on the second day. He/she will fill out the questionnaire in school on Monday, May 14th, and bring home your portion of the questionnaire to be completed. You will be given a few days within which to complete the questionnaire. Upon completion you will send it back to school, with your child, where they will be collected. All answers will be confidential and will be used only for producing average responses.

The first part of the study deals with identifying the television programs that children enjoy and watch the most frequently. We ask that you now list the 5 shows that your children watch the most frequently, and enjoy on broadcast television (not cable). Please do not ask your child, this is your opinion.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Sign this paper and return it to school with your child, showing that you are giving consent for him/her to fill out the questionnaire and survey, in school, on Friday, May 11th and Monday, May 14th. This will also indicate your willingness to participate in the study. You will be further instructed on what to do when you receive the questionnaire.

I give my child permission to participate in this research study

---

(your signature)

(date)

  
Lori Perkins-Detrick  
Iowa State University

**APPENDIX B. HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL**



INFORMATION ON THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH  
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
(Please follow the accompanying instructions for completing this form.)

JAN 2 1990

1. Title of project (please type): 119  
CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FAVORITES AND THE VALUES THEY  
PORTRAY, AS PERCEIVED BY CHILDREN AND THEIR ADULT PARENTS.

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are properly protected. Additions to or changes in procedures affecting the subjects after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review.

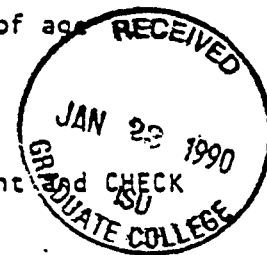
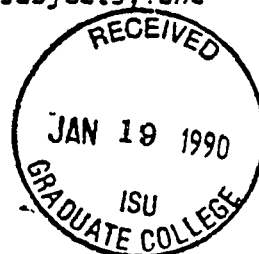
Lori Perkins-Detrick 1/12/90  
Typed Name of Principal Investigator Date

201 NE 12 St. Place, Ankeny 50021 515-965-1895  
Campus Address Campus Telephone  
Home Home

3. Signatures of others (if any). Date Relationship to Principal Investigator

4. ATTACH an additional page(s) (A) describing your proposed research and (B) the subjects to be used, (C) indicating any risks or discomforts to the subjects, and (D) covering any topics checked below. CHECK all boxes applicable.

- ☐ Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate  
☐ Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects  
☐ Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects  
☐ Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects  
☐ Deception of subjects  
☒ Subjects under 14 years of age and (or) ☐ Subjects 14-17 years of age  
☐ Subjects in institutions  
☒ Research must be approved by another institution or agency



5. ATTACH an example of the material to be used to obtain informed consent and CHECK which type will be used.

- ☒ Signed informed consent will be obtained.  
☐ Modified informed consent will be obtained.

6. Anticipated date on which subjects will be first contacted: Month 2 Day 12 Year 90

Anticipated date for last contact with subjects: Month 2 Day 17 Year 90

7. If Applicable: Anticipated date on which audio or visual tapes will be erased and (or) destroyed will be removed from completed s

1/22/90

Month Day Year

8. airperson Date Department or Administrative Unit

1/19/90

Public Affs. Tech

9. Decision of the University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research:

- ☒ Project Approved ☐ Project not ☐ No action required

Patricia M. Keith 5-8-90  
Name of Committee Chairperson Date Signature of Committee Chairperson

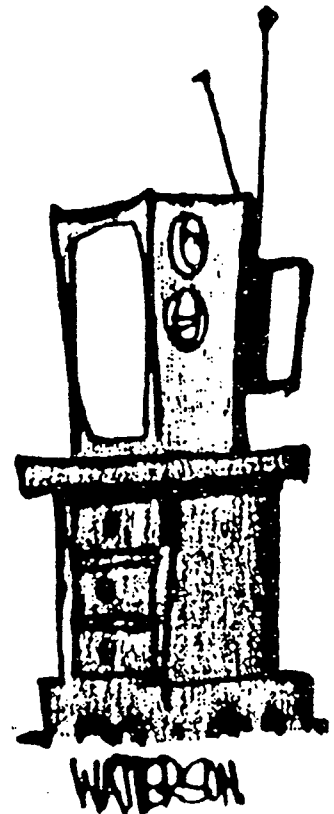
APPENDIX C. F SURVEY

Dear Student,

You are now ready to begin the study. We would like you to answer these questions as honestly as possible. Only give one answer for each question. Please do not discuss your choices with other classmates until all of the papers have been collected. Do not write your name on this paper. Don't worry if you do not know the correct spelling. Just try and spell it as best you can. You may begin.

1. What is your favorite television program?
2. Which show do you watch most often?
3. Who is your favorite television character?
4. If you could become any character on TV for a day, who would you choose and why?

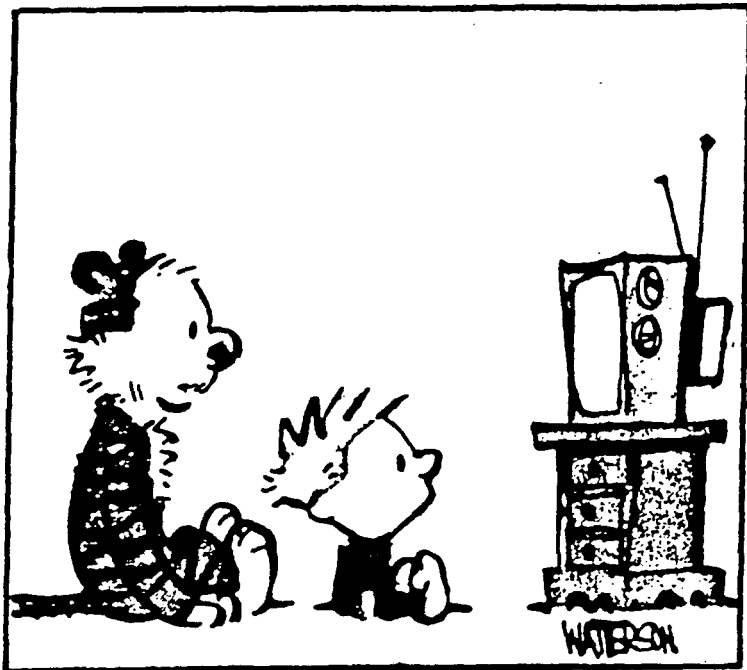
Did you remember to answer why?



APPENDIX D. COVER LETTER AND SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FAVORITES AND THE  
VALUES THEY PORTRAY, AS PERCEIVED BY  
CHILDREN AND THEIR ADULT PARENTS.

BY  
LORI PERKINS-DETRICK



FOR IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
DR. MICHAEL SIMONSON  
APRIL, 1990

Dear Students:

Thank you for taking part in this research study. Through this questionnaire you will have the chance to tell us about several aspects of your favorite television programs and characters.

We would like every one in your class to participate in order to obtain more exact results, but if you do not wish to take part in the study you do not have to; just give the questionnaire back to your teacher.

You will find the questionnaire easy to fill out. Each section gives you directions on what to do. When you finish one section just keep right on going to the next until you have completed the entire questionnaire.

Please read carefully and answer all the questions. Each of them has options. Select the option that you think is most appropriate. Feel free to give your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers. Take time in answering the questions; be as accurate as you can.

Please don't write your name on the questionnaire. This way we can keep the information private.

Before beginning, write today's date on this line:

-----

Please begin. Thank you.

✓ Lori Perkins-DeVall  
Iowa State University

# TELEVISION AND CHILDREN OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

## PART I

Questions in PART I are about your background. The answers will help us to understand the answers you give in PART II of the questionnaire. Please circle or check the blank that fits or tells about you.

### CHILDREN'S INFORMATION

1. I am...  
male \_\_\_\_\_  
female \_\_\_\_\_
2. My age is...  
9 years old \_\_\_\_\_  
10 years old \_\_\_\_\_  
11 years old \_\_\_\_\_  
12 years old \_\_\_\_\_
3. What grade are you in? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name of your school \_\_\_\_\_
5. I am...  
Black/Afro American \_\_\_\_\_  
White \_\_\_\_\_  
Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_  
Vietnamese \_\_\_\_\_  
Chinese \_\_\_\_\_  
Laotian \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. I get this grade in most of my subjects. I am a/an...  
A student \_\_\_\_\_  
B student \_\_\_\_\_  
C student \_\_\_\_\_  
D student \_\_\_\_\_  
F student \_\_\_\_\_
7. I watch this many hours of television on school days (M-F)...  
1-2 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
3-4 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
5-6 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
7-8 hours \_\_\_\_\_

8. On weekends (Saturday & Sunday) I watch this many hours of television a day...  
1-2 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
3-4 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
5-6 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
7-8 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
8 or more hours \_\_\_\_\_

9. I have this many brothers and sisters... (write in the number)  
brothers \_\_\_\_\_  
sisters \_\_\_\_\_

10. I am the oldest child in my family... (first born)  
yes \_\_\_\_\_  
no \_\_\_\_\_

11. These are the two things that I spend the most time doing after school and on weekends... (check 2 only)  
studying \_\_\_\_\_  
playing sports \_\_\_\_\_  
hobby \_\_\_\_\_  
reading \_\_\_\_\_  
watching TV \_\_\_\_\_  
playing with other things \_\_\_\_\_  
doing chores and housework \_\_\_\_\_  
video games \_\_\_\_\_  
playing with my family \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_

12. I like school...  
yes \_\_\_\_\_  
no \_\_\_\_\_

125

You are now ready to begin answering the questionnaire. If you have any questions about the meaning of a word or what a word says please ask your teacher for help. You will see these five words alot, so they have been defined for you. Please use these word meanings when you see these words.

1. Decency-- To think and act in a fair and proper way. Being polite to others. To have and show good manners.
2. Kindness-- Showing you care for others. Acting kindly towards others.
3. Tolerance and Compassion-- To care deeply for and have an understanding of others. To accept others as they are no matter how they look, what color they are, or who their friends are. To be able to get along with others.
4. Self-Discipline-- Taking credit or blame for your own actions. Trying to become a better person.
5. Honesty-- Telling the truth and being honest. Others can trust you.

PART II

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle how you feel about these sentences using the scale below. Mark the letter that matches your choice.

These programs or actors refer to the top five programs that children have chosen as their favorite, most often watched programs. Your answer will be about these 5 television programs. If you have not seen any of the 5 television programs, the children have selected, we ask that you not fill out the questionnaire.

THE 5 FAVORITE TELEVISION PROGRAMS IDENTIFIED BY CHILDREN AGED 9-14 ARE:

1. The Simpsons
2. Full House
3. Growing Pains
4. The Cosby Show
5. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

SCALE

1 = Strongly agree  
2 = Agree  
3 = Undecided  
4 = Disagree  
5 = Strongly disagree

1. On these programs, the people dress nicely and have good manners. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Most "bad guys" are shown as being dishonest, on these programs 1 2 3 4 5
3. These programs have stories like "It's a hard life," and "Watch out for number one". 1 2 3 4 5
4. Kindness towards others and animals are shown a lot on these programs. 1 2 3 4 5
5. On these programs children can see actors and actresses that take the blame for the things they have done wrong, most of the time. They do not try to hide their mistakes. 1 2 3 4 5
6. People, on these programs, that take the blame for their mistakes are rewarded for being honest. 1 2 3 4 5
7. The actors, on these programs, do not act prejudiced to others, instead liking others that are different from themselves is shown often. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Children are shown trying to get away with things a lot on these programs. (Trying to hide their mistakes from their parents.) 1 2 3 4 5

SCALE

1 = Strongly agree  
2 = Agree  
3 = Undecided  
4 = Disagree  
5 = Strongly disagree

9. People, on these programs, are truthful and honest to each other, most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5
10. People, on these programs, take the time to think through problems before acting. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Child actors and actresses, on these programs, can be seen watching television, which shows kids that TV watching is fun and should be done often. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Kids never pretend to be the stars, on these programs when they are playing. 1 2 3 4 5
13. The male actors are always shown to be strong, on these programs. The females are cast in weaker roles and are shown making silly mistakes. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Some of these programs, have a "bad guy" on every show that treats others badly. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Kids can be seen dressing and acting like some of the people, on these programs, in my school. 1 2 3 4 5
16. Actors and actresses, on these programs, are shown being honest to their families, teachers, and loved ones, most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5
17. Dishonest people shown on these programs, have the exciting parts and are more fun to watch. 1 2 3 4 5
18. Children, on these programs, behave nicely and have good manners, both in public and at home. 1 2 3 4 5
19. These programs always show their stars as being respectful and treating others kindly. 1 2 3 4 5
20. People, on these programs, never tease each other in hurtful ways. 1 2 3 4 5
21. People, on these programs, act fake and wishy-washy. Real people do not act like they do. 1 2 3 4 5
22. Adults are shown to be accepting of others, on these programs. 1 2 3 4 5
23. Honesty is shown only by the adults, on these programs, never by the children. 1 2 3 4 5



SCALE	1= Strongly agree 2= Agree 3= Undecided	4= Disagree 5= Strongly disagree		SCALE	1= Strongly agree 2= Agree 3= Undecided	4= Disagree 5= Strongly disagree	
24. The children, on these programs, are always polite to others.	1 2 3 4 5			42. Some people, at times, act and dress in odd ways, so these programs sometimes show people that talk and dress badly, also.	1 2 3 4 5		
25. Stars, on these programs, show their TV families that they understand them and care for them most of the time.	1 2 3 4 5			43. The people, on these programs, always act proper and have good manners when around others.	1 2 3 4 5		
26. Only the "bad guys", on these programs, are allowed to show unkind behavior to others.	1 2 3 4 5			44. Every honest person is not rewarded, on these programs.	1 2 3 4 5		
27. Stars, on these programs, can be seen helping out others that are in need.	1 2 3 4 5			45. Adults, on these programs, are shown disobeying the law often.	1 2 3 4 5		
28. People that dress nicely, on these programs, have more friends.	1 2 3 4 5			46. Stars that are unkind are shown to be ugly and unlikable, on these programs.	1 2 3 4 5		
29. These programs sometimes show stars that will do anything to get what they want even if it hurts others.	1 2 3 4 5			47. Most of the people, on these programs, have been shown lying to someone, at some time.	1 2 3 4 5		
30. The smartest people, on these shows, are shown to have a lot of money and to live in nice houses.	1 2 3 4 5			48. The people, on these programs, can be seen hugging and kissing each other, and saying I love you, often.	1 2 3 4 5		
31. These programs show people that always try to be the best that they can be.	1 2 3 4 5			49. These programs show honest people to be boring and dull.	1 2 3 4 5		
32. These programs show children having respect for themselves and others.	1 2 3 4 5			50. These programs talk about money in nearly every show.	1 2 3 4 5		
33. "Bad guys" are shown, on these programs, as being both honest and dishonest. This is OK, because nobody can be honest all the time.	1 2 3 4 5			51. People, on these programs, never cry, yell or throw things when they are mad.	1 2 3 4 5		
34. These programs show kids that life is hard.	1 2 3 4 5			52. These programs show that sometimes honesty hurts and therefore, it is OK to tell "white lies", to protect someone else's feelings.	1 2 3 4 5		
35. These programs show people that are happy most of the time.	1 2 3 4 5			53. Children, on these programs, can be seen exercising and eating healthy foods on every show.	1 2 3 4 5		
36. These programs show children that strangers can not be trusted.	1 2 3 4 5			54. These programs often show people stealing, lying and cheating.	1 2 3 4 5		
37. Actors often break the law, on these programs, like when they go over the speed limit. This shows kids that breaking the law is fun and OK to do.	1 2 3 4 5			55. These programs show families that have children living with both a mom and a dad together.	1 2 3 4 5		
38. Children that act stubbornly and pout, on these programs, are punished by their parents.	1 2 3 4 5			56. The reason kids like these programs, so much, is because they show real people and events.	1 2 3 4 5		
39. Not all the stars show kindness to each other, on these programs.	1 2 3 4 5			57. The people, on these programs, can sometimes be seen treating "nerds" or "uncool" kids badly.	1 2 3 4 5		
40. Some of the stars, on these programs, are plain looking.	1 2 3 4 5			58. Cartoon characters do cruel things to each other, which is why the show is so funny.	1 2 3 4 5		
41. People, on these programs, can sometimes be seen tricking others, so they can get what they want.	1 2 3 4 5						

## SCALE

1= Strongly agree  
2= Agree  
3= Undecided

4= Disagree  
5= Strongly disagree

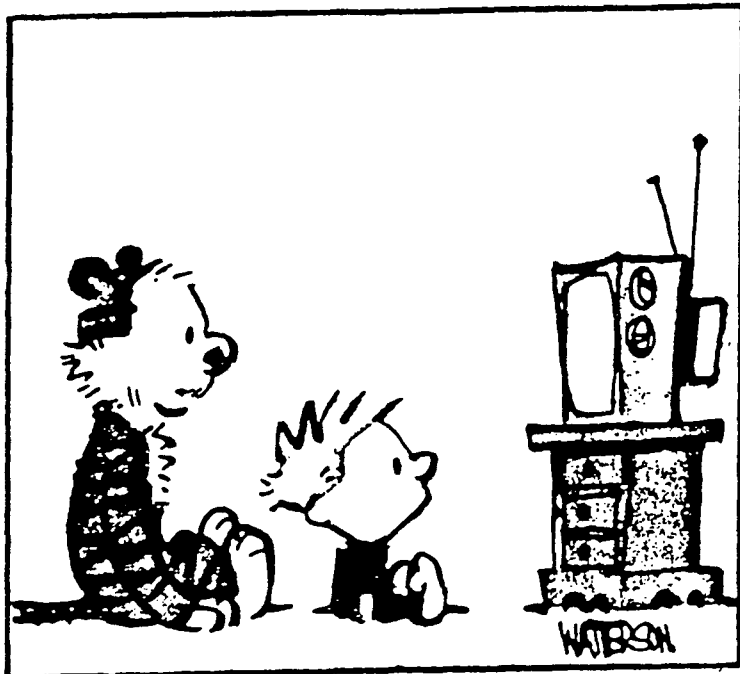
59. The adults, on these programs, do not act like the adults I know. 1 2 3 4 5
60. People, on these programs, never say bad words. 1 2 3 4 5
61. These programs sometimes show people that hate each other. 1 2 3 4 5
62. These programs never show people fighting with each other. 1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

If you would like to say anything more, about these television programs, please write your comments on this page.

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FAVORITES AND THE  
VALUES THEY PORTRAY, AS PERCEIVED BY  
CHILDREN AND THEIR ADULT PARENTS.

BY  
LORI PERKINS-DETRICK



FOR IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
DR. MICHAEL SIMONSON  
APRIL, 1990

Dear Parent/s.

Enclosed you will find two copies of the questionnaire that is part of a research study that is being done at Iowa State University. The study is about children's favorite television programs and characters. We already informed you about this research in a previous letter.

Your child has completed a similar questionnaire in class. We would appreciate it if you and your wife/husband would each fill out a questionnaire, separately.

Please return the questionnaire with your child to school by Friday, June 1st, at the latest, since we already have the questionnaires that were completed by the fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth grade children who were authorized.

Thank you.

Please have your child deliver the envelope with the questionnaires to his/her teacher.

OR Mail to:  
Lori Perkins-Detrick  
201 N.E. 12th St. Pl., Apt. 2  
Ankeny, Iowa 50021

\* For confidentiality, please seal envelope.

If you have any questions, please call COLLECT at (515) 965-1895.

*Lori Perkins-Detrick*  
Lori Perkins-Detrick  
Iowa State University

TELEVISION AND CHILDREN OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

PART 1

Questions in PART 1 are about your background. Please circle or check the blank that describes you or your situation.

ADULT'S INFORMATION

1. SEX

male \_\_\_\_\_  
female \_\_\_\_\_

2. AGE \_\_\_\_\_

3. RACE

Black/Afro American \_\_\_\_\_  
White \_\_\_\_\_  
Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_  
Vietnamese \_\_\_\_\_  
Chinese \_\_\_\_\_  
Laotian \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. My family's yearly gross household income is...

less than 5,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
5,000-20,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
21,000-30,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
31,000-45,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
46,000-60,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
more than 60,000 \_\_\_\_\_

5. I have this many children...

Write in number of children you have \_\_\_\_\_  
The number and ages of the boy children \_\_\_\_\_ ages \_\_\_\_\_  
The number and ages of the girl children \_\_\_\_\_ ages \_\_\_\_\_

6. How many years have you attended school? Please check the highest level attained.

(K-8th) Grade School \_\_\_\_\_  
(9th-12th) High School \_\_\_\_\_  
College (how many years?) \_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate School (how many years?) \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many hours of television do your children watch a day M-F?

1-2 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
3-4 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
5-6 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
7-8 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
more than 8 hours \_\_\_\_\_

8. On weekends (Saturday and Sunday) how many hours of television do your children watch?

2-4 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
5-7 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
8-10 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
10-15 hours \_\_\_\_\_  
more than 15 hours \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you have cable TV?

yes \_\_\_\_\_  
no \_\_\_\_\_

10. Your occupation \_\_\_\_\_

11. These are the two activities that my children spend the most time doing when not in school... (check 2 only)

studying \_\_\_\_\_  
playing sports \_\_\_\_\_  
hobby \_\_\_\_\_  
reading \_\_\_\_\_  
watching TV \_\_\_\_\_  
playing with other things \_\_\_\_\_  
doing chores and housework \_\_\_\_\_  
video games \_\_\_\_\_  
playing with my family \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_

12. My children like school...

yes \_\_\_\_\_  
no \_\_\_\_\_

13. My children watch educational or good-quality programs on TV most of the time...

yes \_\_\_\_\_  
no \_\_\_\_\_

14. The two programs my children enjoy the most, and spend the most time watching are...

1. \_\_\_\_\_ day and time they watch it \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ day and time they watch it \_\_\_\_\_

You are now ready to begin answering the questionnaire. You will see these five words a lot, so they have been defined for you. Please use these definitions in relation to these words.

1. Decency-- To think and act in a proper, reasonable, and fairminded way.
2. Kindness-- Showing sympathy and kindness to others.
3. Tolerance and Compassion-- To have deep feelings for and an understanding of others. To accept others as themselves, regardless of the way they look, their beliefs, and values.
4. Self-Discipline-- Taking responsibility for your own actions. Trying to improve yourself. Being self-regulating.
5. Honesty-- Being truthful, sincere, and trustworthy.

#### PART II

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate how you feel about the following statements using the scale below. Mark the letter that matches your choice.

These programs, refer to the top five programs that children have identified as their favorite, most frequently watched programs. Your answer will be in relation to these 5 television programs. If you have not seen any of the 5 television programs selected we ask that you not fill out the questionnaire.

THE 5 FAVORITE TELEVISION PROGRAMS IDENTIFIED BY CHILDREN AGED 9-14 ARE:

1. The Simpsons
2. Full House
3. Growing Pains
4. The Cosby Show
5. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

#### SCALE

- 1 = Strongly agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = Undecided
- 4 = Disagree
- 5 = Strongly disagree

1. On these programs, the people dress nicely and have good manners. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Most "bad guys" are shown as being dishonest, on these programs 1 2 3 4 5
3. These programs have stories like "It's a hard life," and "Watch out for number one". 1 2 3 4 5
4. Kindness towards others and animals are shown a lot on these programs. 1 2 3 4 5
5. On these programs children can see actors and actresses that take the blame for the things they have done wrong, most of the time. They do not try to hide their mistakes. 1 2 3 4 5
6. People, on these programs, that take the blame for their mistakes are rewarded for being honest. 1 2 3 4 5
7. The actors, on these programs, do not act prejudiced to others. Instead liking others that are different from themselves is shown often. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Children are shown trying to get away with things a lot on these programs. (Trying to hide their mistakes from their parents.) 1 2 3 4 5

## SCALE

1= Strongly agree  
2= Agree  
3= Undecided

4= Disagree  
5= Strongly disagree

9. People, on these programs, are truthful and honest to each other, most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5
10. People, on these programs, take the time to think through problems before acting. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Child actors and actresses, on these programs, can be seen watching television, which shows kids that TV watching is fun and should be done often. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Kids never pretend to be the stars, on these programs when they are playing. 1 2 3 4 5
13. The male actors are always shown to be strong, on these programs. The females are cast in weaker roles and are shown making silly mistakes. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Some of these programs, have a "bad guy" on every show that treats others badly. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Kids can be seen dressing and acting like some of the people, on these programs, in my school. 1 2 3 4 5
16. Actors and actresses, on these programs, are shown being honest to their families, teachers, and loved ones, most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5
17. Dishonest people shown on these programs, have the exciting parts and are more fun to watch. 1 2 3 4 5
18. Children, on these programs, behave nicely and have good manners, both in public and at home. 1 2 3 4 5
19. These programs always show their stars as being respectful and treating others kindly. 1 2 3 4 5
20. People, on these programs, never tease each other in hurtful ways. 1 2 3 4 5
21. People, on these programs, act fake and wishy-washy. Real people do not act like they do. 1 2 3 4 5
22. Adults are shown to be accepting of others, on these programs. 1 2 3 4 5
23. Honesty is shown only by the adults, on these programs, never by the children. 1 2 3 4 5

## SCALE

1= Strongly agree  
2= Agree  
3= Undecided

4= Disagree  
5= Strongly disagree

24. The children, on these programs, are always polite to others. 1 2 3 4 5
25. Stars, on these programs, show their TV families that they understand them and care for them most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5
26. Only the "bad guys", on these programs, are allowed to show unkind behavior to others. 1 2 3 4 5
27. Stars, on these programs, can be seen helping out others that are in need. 1 2 3 4 5
28. People that dress nicely, on these programs, have more friends. 1 2 3 4 5
29. These programs sometimes show stars that will do anything to get what they want even if it hurts others. 1 2 3 4 5
30. The smartest people, on these shows, are shown to have a lot of money and to live in nice houses. 1 2 3 4 5
31. These programs show people that always try to be the best that they can be. 1 2 3 4 5
32. These programs show children having respect for themselves and others. 1 2 3 4 5
33. "Bad guys" are shown, on these programs, as being both honest and dishonest. This is OK, because nobody can be honest all the time. 1 2 3 4 5
34. These programs show kids that life is hard. 1 2 3 4 5
35. These programs show people that are happy most of the time. 1 2 3 4 5
36. These programs show children that strangers can not be trusted. 1 2 3 4 5
37. Actors often break the law, on these programs, like when they go over the speed limit. This shows kids that breaking the law is fun and OK to do. 1 2 3 4 5
38. Children that act stubbornly and pout, on these programs, are punished by their parents. 1 2 3 4 5
39. Not all the stars show kindness to each other, on these programs. 1 2 3 4 5
40. Some of the stars, on these programs, are plain looking. 1 2 3 4 5
41. People, on these programs, can sometimes be seen tricking others, so they can get what they want. 1 2 3 4 5

## SCALE

1= Strongly agree  
2= Agree  
3= Undecided  
4= Disagree  
5= Strongly disagree

42. Some people, at times, act and dress in odd ways, so these programs sometimes show people that talk and dress badly, also. 1 2 3 4 5
43. The people, on these programs, always act proper and have good manners when around others. 1 2 3 4 5
44. Every honest person is not rewarded, on these programs. 1 2 3 4 5
45. Adults, on these programs, are shown disobeying the law often. 1 2 3 4 5
46. Stars that are unkind are shown to be ugly and unlikable, on these programs. 1 2 3 4 5
47. Most of the people, on these programs, have been shown lying to someone, at some time. 1 2 3 4 5
48. The people, on these programs, can be seen hugging and kissing each other, and saying I love you, often. 1 2 3 4 5
49. These programs show honest people to be boring and dull. 1 2 3 4 5
50. These programs talk about money in nearly every show. 1 2 3 4 5
51. People, on these programs, never cry, yell or throw things when they are mad. 1 2 3 4 5
52. These programs show that sometimes honesty hurts and therefore, it is OK to tell "white lies", to protect someone else's feelings. 1 2 3 4 5
53. Children, on these programs, can be seen exercising and eating healthy foods on every show. 1 2 3 4 5
54. These programs often show people stealing, lying and cheating. 1 2 3 4 5
55. These programs show families that have children living with both a mom and a dad together. 1 2 3 4 5
56. The reason kids like these programs, so much, is because they show real people and events. 1 2 3 4 5
57. The people, on these programs, can sometimes be seen treating "nerds" or "uncool" kids badly. 1 2 3 4 5
58. Cartoon characters do cruel things to each other, which is why the show is so funny. 1 2 3 4 5
59. The adults, on these programs, do not act like the adults I know. 1 2 3 4 5
60. People, on these programs, never say bad words. 1 2 3 4 5
61. These programs sometimes show people that hate each other. 1 2 3 4 5
62. These programs never show people fighting with each other. 1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

If you would like to say anything more, about these television programs, please write your comments on this page, or the following page.



APPENDIX E. QUESTIONNAIRE SCORING KEY

## QUESTIONNAIRE SCORING KEY

## HONESTY

2, 9, 16, 17, 23, 33, 36, 41, 44, 47, 49, 52, 54

## TOLERANCE &amp; COMPASSION

7,12,13, 22, 25, 29, 40, 55, 56, 59, 61, 62

## DECENCY

1, 18, 21, 28, 30, 34, 35, 3, 42, 43, 50, 60

## SELF-DISCIPLINE

5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 31, 32, 37, 38, 45, 51, 53

## KINDNESS

4, 14, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 39, 46, 48, 57, 58

These items were reverse scored

3	49	33
8	50	45
11	54	47
13	57	
14	58	
15	59	
17	61	
21	37	
23	39	
28	41	
29	44	